



NAUTICAL QUOTATIONS

SELECTED BY

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QUALIFICATIONS OF THE NAVAL OFFICER

“It is by no means enough that an officer of the navy should be a capable mariner. He must be that, of course, but also a great deal more. He should be as well a gentleman of liberal education, refined manners, punctilious courtesy, and the nicest sense of personal honor.

He should be the soul of tact, patience, justice, firmness, and charity. No meritorious act of a subordinate should escape his attention or be left to pass without its reward, even if the reward is only a word of approval. Conversely, he should not be blind to a single fault in any subordinate, though, at the same time, he should be quick and unflinching to distinguish error from malice, thoughtlessness from incompetency, and well meant shortcoming from heedless or stupid blunder.”

Augustus C. Buell 1900

Written to reflect his views of John Paul Jones

Based on Letters to the Naval Committee

By John Paul Jones 14 September 1775

OFFSHORE RACING COUNCIL (ORC)
REGULATIONS GOVERNING MINIMUM EQUIPMENT
AND ACCOMMODATIONS STANDARDS

“The safety of a yacht and her crew is the sole and inescapable responsibility of the owner, or owner’s representative “The Captain” who must do his best to ensure that the yacht is fully found, thoroughly seaworthy and manned by an experienced crew who are physically fit to face bad weather. He must be satisfied as to the soundness of the hull, spars, rigging, sails and all gear. He must ensure that all safety equipment is properly maintained and stowed and that the crew know where it is kept and how it is to be used.”

"ON THE COLLISION OF WASP AND HOBSON"

"On the sea there is a tradition older even than the traditions of the country itself and wiser in its age than this new custom. **It is the tradition that with responsibility goes authority and with them accountability.**

This accountability is not for the intentions but for the deed. The Captain of a ship, like the captain of a state, is given honor and privileges and trust beyond other men. But let him see the wrong course, let him touch ground, let him bring disaster to his ship or to his men, and he must answer for what he has done.

It is cruel, this accountability of good and well intentioned men. But the choice is that or an end to responsibility and finally, as the cruel sea has taught, an end to the confidence and trust in the men who lead, **for men will not long trust leaders who feel themselves beyond accountability for what they do.** And when men lose confidence and trust in those who lead, order disintegrates into chaos and purposeful ships into uncontrollable derelicts."

"On The Collision of Wasp and Hobson"

Wall Street Journal - editorial

14 May 1952

[26 April 1952 collision between Aircraft Carrier Wasp and Minesweeper Hobson which was cut in two and sank. 176 were killed, with 61 injured survivors.]

UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY SAILING PHILOSOPHY

“We teach sailing and seamanship at the naval academy for one purpose:

To make competent seamen of our midshipmen, who will then be the naval leaders of the future. We aren't interested in making yachtsmen of them. We enter races to find an atmosphere which, like combat, stretches ability and endurance to the limit and allows character to emerge which can reach beyond those previous limits for that extra margin required for victory, where decisions must be made instantly and be coupled with competent execution of complex evolutions. Where numerous variables must be integrated to derive tactics and strategy in interaction. And we send them to sea to learn the fundamental characteristic of the professional seaman:

a deep seated sense of humility in the face of nature and her master. But we never lose sight of our objective -- to produce the best possible officer for the fleet, whether he or she is assigned to a surface ship, a submarine or an aircraft.”

Captain J.B. Bonds, USN

“You can out-think the ocean, but you can't out-slug the ocean.”

Sign at U.S. Naval Academy

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“There’s no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes.”

Norwegian Adage

There is not anything in all the earth as wonderful as that first scent of shore to sailormen come in from deep-sea voyaging- except it be a woman's kiss, she the right woman.”

Bill Adams

“Neither nature nor art has partitioned the sea into empires. The ocean and its treasures are the common property of all men.”

John Adams

“Our state is shaken by innumerable storms, and there is only one hope for its future safety; just like a ship in the middle of the sea which the winds grasp, it now breaks up in the briny water. But if the brothers of Helen, shining stars, appear, good hope restores those downcast spirits.”

Alciato's Book of Emblems, (pub. 1531)Emblem 43, "Spes Proxima" (Hope is Near)

“There are three sorts of people; those who are alive, those who are dead, and those who are at sea.”

Anacharsis, 6th Century B.C.

“It is not what you say, it is not what you think, it is not what you feel. It is what you do.”

Thomas Andrews

December, 1910 Christmas Card

Designer & Builder of Titanic

“You should return to your home port before or when the wind speed exceeds the temperature.”

Anonymous

“You should proceed at a speed less than the depth beneath your keel in meters.”

Anonymous

“You should have at least one foot of anchor chain for every foot of boat”

Anonymous

“The first rule for coastal cruising: start early; finish early.”

Anonymous

“Navigation is what tells you where you are, even when you aren't.”

Anonymous

“Climate is what you expect, weather is what you get.”

Anonymous

“Wind and sails were made for each other.”

Anonymous

“Sailors work like horses at sea and spend their money like asses ashore.”

Anonymous

“It's easy to drift, with the current swift. Just lie in your boat and dream. But in nature's plan, it takes a real man or woman, to paddle the boat upstream.”

Anonymous

"For every big problem there is a simple answer, and it's wrong."

Anonymous

“While we were talking platitudes, As any sailor might,

We forgot to take our longitude, Which was a grievous wrongitude,

So we did not reach Hong Kongitude, Till very late that night.”

Anonymous

“Sailboats are safe in a harbor. But that's not what boats were made for.”

Anonymous

“Life's a reach . . . Then you jibe.”

Anonymous

“Who won't be ruled by the rudder must be ruled by the rock.”

Anonymous

“The beauty of celestial navigation is that you don't have to know where you are to determine where you are.”

Anonymous

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“Engines are the work of the devil.”

Anonymous

“For navigation purposes on a sailboat, never tell the helmsperson anything true.” Anonymous

“A Sea-man hath a valiant heart,

And bears a noble minde,

He scorneth once to shrink or start

For any stormy wind.

Anonymous Ballad

“If wishes were fishes, the sea would be full”

Anonymous

“A wanderer is man from his birth.

He was born in a ship

On the breast of the River of Time

Brimming with wonder and joy.”

Matthew Arnold

“Experience is that what you got when you didn't get what you wanted.”

Phil Arnold

“The expert and prudent navigator will act as his prudence dictates . . . one is more exposed to have misfortune in navigation than good fortune, due to [the channels'] narrowness and the lack of any way out, or places too difficult to pass, which is the case when within it with the cross winds.”

Juan Pantoja Y Arriaga The Log of the Frigate Princesa (1782)

“A knot is never “nearly right”; it is either exactly right or it is hopelessly wrong, one or the other; there is nothing in between.”

Clifford Asheley

“What is more pleasant than a friendly little yacht, a long stretch of smooth water, a gentle breeze, the stars?”
William Atkin

“Land was created to provide a place for boats to visit.”
Brooks Atkinson

“He began in a tone of great taste and feeling, to talk of the sea and the sea shore.” Jane Austen

“There is nothing that duct tape or roses can't fix.”
John Egils Avots 'Laiva'

“The sea continues to feed our spiritual need for adventure into the unknown.” Robert Ballard

“Only two sailors, in my experience, never ran aground. One never left port and the other was an atrocious liar.”
Don Bamford

“I used my engine for two years, and then, taking arms against a sea of troubles, cut my troubles in half by pitching Little Dipper's engine overside . . . Life afloat was vastly simplified. No more anxieties about cigarettes, drip pans, backfire baffles. No more work on spark plugs, coil, or stuffing box. A welcome reduction in yard bills. Guests forebore to make schedules, and so proved better company. When the engine went overside I began really to enjoy what I had bough a boat to get: the freedom and zest of sail.”
Richard Baum

“I must confess that many times, when I saw my sails in ribbons and my poor boat struggling desperately on a raging sea, plunging down terrific precipices, disappearing under monstrous waves that threaten to swallow her, then pointing her bows to the black skies as if to implore the mercy of Him whose will disposes of life and death, yes, many times I said to myself: ‘If I get away with it this time, I’ll never set foot on a boat again.’”

Marcel Bardinaux

“The ideal cruise requires a good yacht, pleasant company, and a strange coast with plenty of islands and rocks.”

Humphrey Barton

“Entering port is, I think, the cream of the sport. A strange port, a yacht with no engine, a quiet summer’s night and there one has all the makes of a pleasant and most interesting little bit of seamanship.”

Humphrey Barton

“I often sail with clever, knowledgeable folk who have one look at the sky at dawn and say: ‘Hmm, I don’t like the look of this sky at all. We shall have more wind than we want today.’ The ominous signs which seem so obvious to them are usually invisible to me, so I go below and tap the glass and wonder whether they are right. But as often as not they are wrong.”

Humphrey Barton

“The dolphin wheels, the sea-cows snort,
And unseen mermaids pearly song
Comes bubbling up, the weeds among.”

Thomas Lovell Beddoes

“I start from the premise that no object created by man is as satisfying to his body and soul as a proper sailing yacht.”

Arthur Beiser 1978

The Proper Yacht

“The best noise in all the world is the rattle of the anchor chain when one comes into harbor at last and lets it go over the bows.”
Hilaire Belloc On Sailing the Sea

“When a man weighs anchor in a little ship or large one he does a jolly thing! He cuts himself off and he starts for freedom and the chance of things”.
Hilaire Belloc

“Certainly every man that goes to sea in a little boat of this kind learns terror and salvation, happy living, air, danger, exultation, glory, and repose at the end; and they are not words to him, but, on the contrary, realities which will afterwards throughout his life give the mere words a full meaning.”
Hilaire Belloc

“The sea drives truth into a man like salt.”
Hilaire Belloc

“The sea provides visions, darkneses, revelations..”
Hilaire Belloc

“For one thing, I was no longer alone; a man is never alone with the wind – and the boat made three.”
Hilaire Belloc

“The cruiser, the strong little, deep little boat . . . is a complete satisfaction for man.”
Hilaire Belloc

“I would rather die of thirst, ten miles off the headlands in a brazen can, having lost my dinghy in the previous storm, than have on board what is monstrously called today an “auxiliary”. The name is worthy of the thing. By auxiliaries the Roman army perished. Further, it is a nasty foreign sort of term. Call it the machine and tell the truth. I am told by those who use the abomination that it is ashamed of itself, and often will not start, as though to say, ‘You came out to sail the seas, and I am reluctant to cheat wind, weather, and tide in your favor.’”
Hilaire Belloc

“Indeed, the cruising of a boat here and there is very much what happens to the soul of man in a larger way. We set out for places which we do not reach, or reach too late; and, on the way, there befall us all manner of things which we could never have awaited.”

Hilaire Belloc

“He set a regal cap on his famous victory, in the true style of the outrageous character we all know him to be. In the middle of the post-match press conference, he collapsed, heroically drunk, with an empty bottle of rum still gripped in his fist.

It was a display of gloriously drunken joy. And, of course, it was frowned upon by the committee of the New York Yacht Club. Rather than frowning, they should have installed a brass commemorative plaque in the place where Turner fell, for this was without doubt the last great gesture of carefree amateur recklessness that would ever be seen in the America’s Cup.”

John Bertand,

Describing Ted Turner after his winning of the America’s Cup

“The sea has many voices. Listen to the surf, really lend it your ears, and you will hear in it a world of sounds: hollow boomings and heavy roarings, great watery tumbings and tramlings, long hissing seethes, sharp, rifle-shot reports, splashes, whispers, the grinding undertone of stones, and sometimes vocal sounds that might be the half heard talk of people in the sea.”

Henry Beston

“Having he Lloyd’s Register of Shipping certify these America’s Cup racers is a bit like having the Royal English Trucking Association certify a Formula One race car.”

Tom Blackaller

“Up that rigging, you monkeys. Break out those sails and let them fill with the wind to carry us all to freedom.”

Capt. Blood (played by Erol Flynn)

“Cruising has two main pleasures. One is to go out into wider waters from a sheltered place. The other is to go into a sheltered place from wide waters.”

Howard Bloomfield

“For the truth is that I already know as much about my fate as I need to know. The day will come when I will die. So the only matter of consequence before me is what I will do with my allotted time. I can remain on shore, paralyzed with fear, or I can raise my sails and dip and soar in the breeze.”

Richard Bode

First You Have to Row a Little Boat

“In sailing, as in life, momentum is a valued commodity, the secondary source of power that keeps us going long after the original source has disappeared.”

Richard Bode

“There are many points on the compass rose. I had to locate the few that were meant for me and head for those that summoned me with a passion, for they were the ones that gave meaning to my life.”

Richard Bode

“They that go down to the sea in ships; and occupy their business in great waters; these men see the works of the lord; and his wonders in the deep”

Book of Common Prayer

“What I know about cruising has been learned almost exclusively from two sources; good books, and a tremendous number of mistakes. Of these two possibilities, I can heartily recommend leaning from books, especially if it means avoiding some of the mistakes.” Loren R. Borland

“Never go into strange places on a falling tide without a pilot.”

Thomas Gibson Bowles

“There was no sextant aboard. I had priced one at Tenerife and the cost appalled me. It seemed better to buy four pounds’ worth of provisions and take a slightly longer time to make the journey. I had no intention of paying forty-five pounds for a sextant and its related tables for the sake of saving a mere seven or eight days. After all, if Columbus could cross the Atlantic without a chart, it seemed reasonable that I could do it without a sextant. If I did not hit Canada, I’d run ashore at Argentina – or somewhere in between.”

Francis Brenton

“I hated to go ashore, for the boat looked smaller every time I left. Then one fine morning I awoke, looked more closely at my floating home, and saw everything in its true perspective: the *Nengo* wasn’t small, she was compact.”

Francis Brenton

“They were all fine sailing days, but unfortunately they were ideal only for sailing in the wrong direction.”

Francis Brenton

“The thrill of sailing and putting out in a boat cannot be expressed in words. It is the feeling of power and the awe of making the wind do your work . . . or putting your strength to the severest test of man and rigging. It is the aesthetic appeal of a beautiful hull and a bleached sail. And it is the quiet noise of water sloshing against the prow as you rest in your berth in the forecabin, absorbing a lifetime of memories.”

Alan Brown

“I know who you are, but you’ll have to wipe your feet.”

Capt. Richard Brown 1851

Schooner *America* said to Prince Albert of England

“This is what sailing is about. You sail and sail and sail, enjoying the lovely aspect of God’s seas and then you wish for a little change, a bit of adverse weather, something to show off your expertise, perhaps just to prove to yourself you’re good at playing the chess game of nature and survival.”

Williams F. Buckley, Jr.

“The ocean has always been a salve to my soul . . . the best thing for a cut or abrasion was to go swimming in salt water. Later down the road of life, I made the discovery that salt water was also good for the mental abrasions one inevitably acquires on land.”

Jimmy Buffett

“One cannot look at the sea without wishing for the wings of a swallow.”

Sir Richard Burton

“O’er the glad waters of the dark blue sea, our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free.”

Lord Byron

“Of all man-made things there is nothing so lovely as a sailboat. It is a living thing with a soul and feelings – responsive as a saddle horse, loyal as a dog, and thoroughly downright decent. Every sailboat has a character all its own. No builder has ever succeeded in turning out two boats exactly alike. Their measurements may be identical, but the difference is in their character.”

H.A. Callahan

“If you sawed open that boy’s head, there’d be a boat in there.”

Capt. Roy Campbell

Describing another Skipper

“The man who goes farthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare. The sure-thing boat never gets far from shore.”

Dale Carnegie

“In the artificial world of his cities and towns, man often forgets the true nature of his planet. The sense of all these things comes to him most clearly in the course of long ocean voyage, when he watches day after day the receding rim of the horizon, ridged and furrowed by waves. . . and then, as never on land, he knows the truth that his world is a water world, a planet dominated by its covering mantle of ocean, in which the continents are but transient intrusions of land above the all-encircling sea.”

Rachel Carson

“And then, as never on land, he knows the truth that his world is a water world, a planet dominated by its covering mantle of ocean, in which the continents are but transient intrusions of land above the surface of the all-encircling sea.”

Rachel Carson The Sea Around Us

“He had bought a large map representing the sea, Without the least vestige of land: And the crew were much pleased when they found it to be a map they could all understand. "What's the good of Mercator's North Poles and Equators, Tropics, Zones, and Meridian Lines?" So the Bellman would cry: and the crew would reply "They are merely conventional signs!"

Lewis Carroll The Hunting of the Snark

“The thing I realized this last few days is that the earth is a big place.” Paul Cayard

“I've won America's Cup races by one second. That's where I come from, feet and inches, seconds. In that environment, you don't give up anything to anyone.” Paul Cayard

“You buy an 8 foot soft transom dinghy because it's inexpensive and stows easily in the lazarette, but will not carry 4 adults. You replace it with a 10 footer with a 10 hp engine that will take 4 adults, but will not go as fast as a 12 footer with a 20 hp. You trade the 10 in on a 14 footer with a 30 and go even faster. You put the 14 in the garage because you can no longer stow it on the foredeck. You buy an 8 foot dinghy that's economical and stows easily in the lazarette.”

Jack Chalais

“Give me a spirit that on this life's rough sea, loves t' have his sails filled with a lusty wind, Even till his sail-yards tremble, his masts crack . . .”

George Chapman (1559 - 1634)

The Revenge of Busoy d'Ambois

“What bliss to be in the cockpit with the sun and the warm breeze on one’s skin, just watching the sea, and the sky, and the sails. . .”

Sir Francis Chichester

“A voyage is like a classical drama: it starts slowly and works up with many adventurous incidents to the finish.”

Sir Francis Chichester

“I decided that keeping watch was a waste of time, went below and mixed myself my anti-scorbutic. The lemon juice . . . not only keeps physical scurvy away, but if enough of the right kind of whisky is added to it, mental scurvy as well. *Gipsy Moth* sailed on through the dark.”

Sir Francis Chichester

“Any damn fool can circumnavigate the world sober. It takes a really good sailor to do it drunk.”

Sir Francis Chichester

“To the question, ‘When were your spirits at their lowest ebb?’ The obvious answer seemed to be, ‘When the gin gave out’.”

Sir Francis Chichester

“I received in succession our stores, and stored the cargo as best I could while the dingy sank lower and lower in the water, and its precarious superstructure grew higher.” Erskine Childers

“Then we are through. We are inside the harbor. The circle is closed. The dream fulfilled. The vow to myself kept. I have sailed around the world alone.” Webb Chiles

“A sailor is an artist whose medium is the wind.” Webb Chiles

“No more beautiful sight can be imagined than a morning at sea, with these magnificent vessels racing in mid-ocean, perhaps two or three of them in sight of one another; the sun rising among golden clouds; the dark blue sea flecked with glistening white caps; long, low black hulls cleaving a pathway of sparkling foam; towering masts, and yards covered with snowy canvas which bellies to the crisp morning breeze as if sculptured in marble . . .” Captain Arthur H. Clark

“A shipowner was about to send to sea an emigrant ship. He knew that she was old, and not overwell built at the first; that she had seen many seas and climes, and often had needed repairs. Doubts had been suggested to him that possibly she was not seaworthy. These doubts preyed upon his mind, and made him unhappy; he thought that perhaps he ought to have her thoroughly overhauled and refitted, even though this should put him to great expense. Before the ship sailed, however, he succeeded in overcoming these melancholy reflections. He said to himself that she had gone safely through so many voyages and weathered so many storms, that it was idle to suppose that she would not come safely home from this trip also. He would put his trust in providence, which could hardly fail to protect all these unhappy families that were leaving their fatherland to seek for better times elsewhere. He would dismiss from his mind all ungenerous suspicions about the honesty of builders and contractors. In such ways he acquired a sincere and comfortable conviction that his vessel was thoroughly safe and seaworthy; he watched her departure with a light heart, and benevolent wishes for the success of the exiles in their strange new home that was to be; and he got his insurance money when she went down in mid-ocean and told no tales.

What shall we say of him? Surely this, that he was verily guilty of the death of those men. It is admitted that he did sincerely believe in the soundness of his ship; but the sincerity of his conviction can in nowise help him, because *he had no right to believe on such evidence as was before him*. He had acquired his belief not by honestly earning it in patient investigation, but by stifling his doubts . . .

William K. Clifford

The Ethics of Belief, 1874

“Alone, alone, all, all, alone’

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Alone on a wide, wide sea.”

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

“Our voyage had commenced, and at last we were away, gliding through the clean water, past the reeds. Care was lifted from our shoulders, for we were free from advice, pessimism, officialism, heat and hot air”.

K. Adlard Coles

“The difference between a gale and what has become known as a “survival” storm is that in the former, with winds of force 8, or perhaps 9 (say 30 to 45 knots mean velocity), the skipper and crew retain control and can take the measures which they think best, whereas in a survival gale of force 10 or over, perhaps gusting at hurricane strength, wind and sea become the masters.”

K. Adlard Coles Heavy Weather Sailing

“The three major factors to consider in a successful crewman are attitude, attitude, and attitude.”

Dennis Conner

“The quality that links all of these sailors (and myself) is a winning self-image. They know they are the best men for the job of winning sailboat races, and most of them keep looking for more sailboat races to win. They have the self-confidence to know when to ask for help from experts and to know that laying the percentages is better than taking chances. They are talented, competitive men but intelligent enough to realize that skill and drive are not enough. They have to work hard too. I think it all comes down to a statement: ‘Give yourself no excuse to lose’.”

Dennis Conner

“A passage under sail brings out in the course of days whatever there may of the sea love and sea sense in an individual whose soul is not indissolubly wedded to the pedestrian shore.”

Joseph Conrad

“The true peace of god begins at any point 1,000 miles from the nearest land.” Joseph Conrad

“The humblest craft that floats makes its appeal to a seaman by the faithfulness of her life.”

Joseph Conrad

“And I would recommend to them to keep the halyards clear for running, and to remember that any fool can carry on but a wise man knows how to shorten sail in time . . .” Joseph Conrad

2 June 1923 Letter to owner and crew of ‘Tusitalia’

“

Nowhere else than upon the sea do the days, weeks and months fall away quicker into the past. They seem to be left astern as easily as the light air-bubbles in the swirls of the ship’s wake.”

Joseph Conrad

“The sea never changes and its works, for all the talk of men, are wrapped in mystery.”

Joseph Conrad

“If you would know the age of the earth, look upon the sea in a storm. The greyness of the whole immense surface, the wind furrows upon the faces of the waves, the great masses of foam, tossed about and waving, like matted white locks, give to the sea in a gale an appearance of hoary age, lustreless, dull, without gleams, as though it had been created before light itself.” Joseph Conrad

“Any fool can carry on, but a wise man knows how to shorten sail in time.” Joseph Conrad

“Landfall and Departure mark the rhythmical swing of a seaman’s life.” Joseph Conrad

“Of all the living creatures upon the land and sea, it is ships alone that cannot be taken in by barren pretenses, that will not put up with bad art from their masters.” Joseph Conrad

“The ship, a fragment detached from the earth, went on lonely and swift like a small planet.” Joseph Conrad

“For what is the array of the strongest ropes, the tallest spars, and the stoutest canvas against the mighty breath of the infinite, but thistle stalks, cobwebs, and gossamer.” Joseph Conrad

“The clouds raced with her mastheads; they rose astern enormous and white, soared to the zenith, flew past, and, falling down the wide curve of the sky, seemed to dash headlong into the sea – the clouds swifter than the ship, more free, but without a home.” Joseph Conrad

“On looking to windward, he beheld the green masses of water that were rolling in towards the land, with a violence that seemed irresistible, crowned with ridges of foam; and there were moments when the air appeared filled with sparkling gems, as the rays of the rising sun fell upon the spray that was swept from wave to wave.”

James Fenimore Cooper

“The only record I would cherish would be for the longest circumnavigation, the most dilly-dallying on the way.”

Gwenda Cornell

"Something about sailing a boat brings so many senses and sensations into play that it's very difficult to pinpoint what it is, specifically, that makes me like it so much: the sight of sails and sheets overhanging the water; the foam and spray flying as the bow(s) cut the water; the motion of the boat; the physical and mental ballet necessary to handle the boat correctly. A sailboat might just be the most beautiful, sensuous, and intelligent blend of man/machine/elements that exists in the world today. The relationship between the three is the most harmonious I have experienced so far. Besides, you can have a beer while you do it”

Corsair Marine

“And biased by full sails, meridians reel,
Thy purpose -- still one shore beyond desire!
The sea's green crying towers a-sway, beyond.”

Hart Crane

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“The craft pranced and reared, and plunged like an animal. As each wave came, and she rose for it, she seemed like a horse making at a fence outrageously high. The manner of her scramble over these walls of water is a mystic thing, and, moreover, at the top of them were ordinarily these problems in white water, the foam racing down from the summit of each wave, requiring a new leap, and a leap from the air. Then, after scornfully bumping a crest, she would slide, and race, and splash down a long incline and arrive bobbing and nodding in front of the next menace.”

Stephen Crane

“To be successful at sea we must keep things simple.”

R.D. Culler

“Boats, like whiskey, are all good.”

R.D. (Pete) Culler

“For whatever we lose (like a you or a me)
it’s always ourselves we find in the sea.”

e.e. cummings

“There was a grandeur in everything around, which gave almost a solemnity to the scene; a silence and solitariness which affected everything. Not a human being but ourselves for miles; and no sound heard but the pulsations of the great Pacific.”

Richard Henry Dana

“I was so lost in the sight, I forgot the presence of the man who came out with me, until he said, half to himself, still looking at the marble sails – ‘How quietly they do their work!’”

Richard Henry Dana

Two Years Before the Mast

“We were once more upon the ocean, where sky and water meet.” Richard Henry Dana

“I never knew a sailor, in my life, who would not prefer a pot of hot coffee or chocolate, on a cold night, to all the rum afloat.”

Richard Henry Dana

“There is also such a connection between different parts of a vessel, that one rope can seldom be touched without altering another. You cannot stay a mast aft by the back stays, without slacking up the head stays, etc., etc. If we add to this all the tarring, greasing, oiling, varnishing, painting, scraping, and scrubbing which is required in the course of a long voyage, and also remember this is all to be done in addition to watching at night, steering, reefing, furling, bracing, making and setting sail, and pulling, hauling and climbing in every direction, one will hardly ask, ‘What can a sailor find to do at sea?’”

Richard Henry Dana

Two Years Before the Mast

“Reefing is the most exciting part of a sailor’s duty. All hands are engaged upon it, and after the halyards are let go, there is no time to be lost – no ‘sogering’, or hanging back, then. If one is not quick enough, another runs over him. The first on the yard goes to the weather earing, the second to the lee, and the next two to the ‘dogs ears’; while the others lay along into the bunt, just giving each other elbow-room. In reefing, the yard-arms (the extremes of the yards) are the posts of honor; but in furling, the strongest and most experienced stand in the slings, (or middle of the yard,) to make up the bunt.”

Richard Henry Dana Two Years Before the Mast

“So on the deep and open sea I set forth, with a single ship and that small band of comrades that had never left me yet.”

Dante “Voyage of Ulysses”

“Out of sight of land the sailor feels safe. It is the beach that worries him.” Charles G. Davis

“A tourist remains an outsider throughout his visit, but a sailor is part of the local scene from the moment he arrives.”

Ann Davision

“It is the weather, not work, that wears out sails.”

Thomas Fleming Day

“Bad cooking is responsible for more trouble at sea than all other things put together.”

Thomas Fleming Day

“As the miles bubble under the keel, sailors seem to shed skins one after the other until the scales so necessary for living in crowded cities and towns drop away, leaving just the human creature all but naked under the stars. For most, once those scales are gone, they never grow back quite as thick and hard as they once were.”

George Day

“The lovely thing about cruising is that planning usually turns out to be of little use.”

Dom Degnon

“ ‘To sail is the thing,’ wrote Aruthur Ransome in his children’s classic *Swallows and Amazons*. And just what is that thing? Every sailor knows. It’s what the poets say and the pictures show, and everything else, too; it’s the joy of casting off and the delight of returning home, and it’s all the winds and waves in between. It’s the beauty of a boat and the power of the currents, the sound of ratcheting winches and the strain on the wheel; it’s the fair breezes and sunsets, the storms and luffing sails. It’s the beer in the bar when the race is done, and that moment when you feel you’ll never get there. It’s what sailors mean when, safe and dry, standing on solid ground, they look at you and say ‘I’d rather be sailing’ .”

Ann Depue

“A sailing vessel is alive in a way that no ship with mechanical power ever be.”

Aubrey de Selincourt

“There is a poetry of sailing as old as the world.”

Antoine De Saint-Exupery

The cure for anything is alt water - sweat, tears, or the sea.”

Isak Dinesen

“The five of us divided the watches, moving in progression in a system so complicated that an argument invariably arose every four hours.”

Edward H. Dodd, Jr.

“It isn’t that life ashore is distasteful to me. But life at sea is better.”

Sir Francis Drake

“No one likes an ugly boat, however cheap or fast.”

Roger Duncan

“It’s out there at sea that you are really yourself.”

Vito Dumas

“Learning how to make a boat go fast is easier ashore than it is afloat because there is no time to stop and think when you are racing.”

Paul Elvstrom

“The good ship darts through the water all day; all night, like a fish, quivering with speed, gliding through liquid leagues, sliding from horizon to horizon.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The wonder is always new that any sane man can be a sailor.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

“We study the sailor, the man of his hands, man of all work; all eye, all finger, muscle, skill & endurance; a tailor a carpenter, cooper, stevedore, & clerk & astronomer besides. He is a great saver, and a great quiddle by the necessity of his situation.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Head winds are sore vexations & the more passengers, the sorer.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night sailed off in a wooden shoe – sailed on a river of crystal light into a sea of dew.”
Eugen Field (1850 - 1895) Wynken, Blynken, and Nod

“So we beat on against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.” F. Scott Fitzgerald

“But you must at all times remember that the power of the sea is greater than anything else on earth; and that although many fleets have sailed over it, not one has conquered or harnessed it, and no one ever will. Remember too, that like fire, the sea is a good friend but a bad master, so you must never, never allow yourself to get into a position where the sea takes control.” Uffa Fox

“Hereafter, if you should observe an occasion to give your officers and friends a little more praise than is their due, and confess more fault than you can justly be charged with, you will only become the sooner for it, a great captain.”
Benjamin Franklin 1780

To John Paul Jones

“Do they ask me what pleasure I find on the sea?

– why, absence from land is a pleasure to me:

A hamper of porter, and plenty of grog, A friend, when too sleepy, to give me a jog,
A coop that will always some poultry afford, Some bottles of gin, and no parson on board,
A crew that is brisk when it happens to blow, One compass on deck and another below,
A girl, with more sense than the girl at the head, To read me a novel, or make up me bed --
The man that has these, has a treasure in store That millions possess not who live upon shore.”

Philip Freneau

“He that will not sail till all dangers are over must never put to sea.” Thomas Fuller

“A day or so before reaching port there would be a great primping and grooming of shore clothes and the body lavished with attention. A very few minutes after the vessel was secured t the wharf an assembly of total strangers appeared momentarily on deck and then disappeared in the direction of the local settlement as fast as they could go.” Ernest K. Gann

“The San Francisco waterfront abounds in salty characters, many of whom have an easy command of nautical terminology, a vast knowledge of all that pertains to ships and the sea, and practically no experience beyond the end of the dock.” Ernest K. Gann

“I want a boat that drinks six, eats four, and sleeps two.” Ernest K. Gann

“In little vessels, there is joy. In large vessels there is travail and perplexity.” Ernest K. Gann

“It is remarkable how quickly a good and favorable wind can sweep away the maddening frustrations of shore living.” Ernest K. Gann

“When the full displeasure of the elements falls upon a man, he is temporarily overwhelmed and permanently changed within. After the trial he is either dead or forever afterward humble and discreet.” Ernest K. Gann

“Of course he doesn’t (want to go).

It’s easy to fight when you’ve got a lot of ships to work with. The real crunch comes when you’re down to almost nothing. Then you either play it safe and you probably lose it all or you take a chance . . . They didn’t want to go.

They didn’t want to get blown out of the sky and leave B5 defenses, and they sure as hell didn’t want to die. But they did it because Sheridan told them to do it and because it was right . . .

You don’t follow an order because you know for sure that it’s going to work out. You do what you’re told because the C.O. (commanding officer) has the moral authority that says you may not come back. But the cause is just, and fair and necessary.”

Mr. Garibaldi

“She had a voice of silver and lips of coral red. She climbed the dolphin-striker and kissed the figure-head.”

Crosbie Garstin

“I wanted freedom, open air, adventure. I found it on the sea.”

Alain Gerbault

“Adventure means risking something. And it is when we are doing that, that we know what a splendid thing life is and how splendidly it can be lived. The man who never dares never does. The man who never risks never wins. It is far better to venture and fail than to lie on the hearth rug like a sleepily purring cat. Only fools laugh at failure. Wise men laugh at the lazy and the too contented, and at those who are so timid that they dare undertake nothing.”

Alain Gerbault

“There is but a plank between a sailor and eternity.”

Thomas Gibbons

“The wind and waves are always on the side of the ablest navigator.” Edmund Gibbon

or Edward Gibson

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

“O mighty God, grant weather, wind and tide,

Till on my country coast our anchor fall.”

Barnabe Googe 1563

“When I look to the sea I see peaceful and powerful infinity.”

Lou Gossett, Jr.

“At sea, I learned how little a person needs, not how much.”

Robin Lee Graham

“Is it so nice as all that?” asked the Mole shyly . . .

“Nice? It’s the only thing,” the Water Rat said solemnly, as he leant forward for his stroke. “Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing -- absolutely nothing -- half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats - or with boats. In or out of 'em, it doesn't mater. Nothing seems really to matter, that's the charm of it. Whether you get away or whether you don't, whether you arrive at your destination or whether you reach somewhere else, or whether you never get anywhere at all, you're always busy and you never do anything in particular. When you've done it, there's always something else to do, and you can do it if you like, but you'd much better not.”

Kenneth Grahame Wind in The Willows

“This has been a wonderful day!” said he, as the Rat shoved off and took to the sculls again.

“Do you know, I’ve never seen in a boat in ally my life?” “What?” cried the Rat, openmouthed: “Never been in a – you never – well, I – what have you been doing, then?”

Kenneth Grahame Wind in The Willows

“The history of seafaring is a part of the study of man, it has its practical side, field work performed in the pleasantest of circumstances, and it is great fun, providing you don’t take it too seriously, as if boats were an art form, or human beings, or ideas, or God.”

Basil Greenhill

“It takes several years for anyone to learn to handle a yacht reasonably well, and a lifetime to admit how much more there is to learn.”

Maurice Griffiths

“Being hove to in a long gale is the most boring way of being terrified I know.” Donald Hamilton

“Knowing your vessel is everything; each one is a law unto herself. Some pretty fancy maneuvering can be done by a skipper who has learned his ship’s idiosyncrasies.”

Donald Hamilton

“The cardinal rule of good taste in all design, on land or sea, is honesty of purpose.”

John G. Hanna

“If it doesn't move and it should, spray it with WD40. If it does move and it shouldn't, wrap it with duct tape.”

Bill Harding

“Like a baby. Woke up every tow hours and cried.”

Sir James Hardy

His reply to the question of how he slept after losing the first race of the 1974 America’s Cup:

“Thought is the wind, knowledge the sail, and mankind the vessel.”

August Hare

“A sailing ship is no democracy; you don’t caucus a crew as to where you’ll go any more than you inquire when they’d like to shorten sail.”

Sterling Hayden

“Wind is to sailing what money is to life on shore.”

Sterling Hayden

“Up aloft you hang on. Beyond the breakwater the wild Atlantic growls. Plumes of spray pounce on lighthouse windows . . . Up here, you feel the motion more. You feel her reach out over a sea and hang; then down she goes with a sickening rush, and the second after the crash your mast goes buckling forward with a sideways motion. You wonder how wood can take it.” Sterling Hayden

“It’s like standing under a cold shower tearing up five-pound notes.” Ted Heath

Prime Minister of England, about ocean racing

“Many emergencies involving the crew or vessel can be avoided by preliminary and on-going physical and mental preparation. Before embarking on an off-shore passage, you ought to be in good physical shape, properly garbed, and psychologically prepared.” Richard Henderson

Sea Sense

“The cabin of a small yacht is truly a wonderful thing; not only will it shelter you from the tempest, but from the other troubles of life; it is a safe retreat.” L. Francis Herreshoff

“Most everyone who has inherited a love of the sea feels that the clipper bow is a befitting finial to a sailing vessel, as a beautiful head of hair is to a woman. Perhaps neither the long hair nor the bowsprit is necessary, but when either is removed there is a loss of character that is hard to replace.”

L. Francis Herreshoff

“The greatest difference between the beautiful yacht and the plain one is the way their crews treat them, for the crew of the beautiful yacht usually gives her tender loving care. They realize that all of their work will show to advantage, while the crew of the plain yacht has learned from experience that nothing they can do will help much, for the sailorman at heart is still a romanticist.”

L. Francis Herreshoff

“What a joy is a sweet-smelling, spotless cabin, with all clothes neatly stowed high and dry. What a joy to sit in such a cabin under the soft glow of a kerosene lamp and study the chart for an even more snug and romantic cove than the one you are anchored in and lay a course to regions even farther from the maddening crowds: places where men are sailors or farmers and can converse directly with the gods and can feel the pulse of nature...”

L. Francis Herreshoff

“If H-28's design is only slightly changed, the whole balance may be thrown out. If you equip her with deadeyes, build her with sawn frames, or fill her virgin bilge with ballast, the birds will no longer carol over her, nor will the odors arising from the cabin make poet nor will your should be fortified against a world of warlords, politicians and fakers.”

L. Francis Herreshoff

“Now, motors, like women, are not all bad, but it must be admitted there is a great difference among them. I prefer the simple, clean, reliable ones, and admire the economical ones, and almost love the quiet ones that are small and don't smell, but here again we must make a compromise, as all through a yacht's design, for whereas the small ones are economical, they are apt to be hot and smelly, while the big ones keep quiet and cool.”

L. Francis Herreshoff

“There are only two colors to paint a boat, black or white, and only a fool would paint a boat black”

Nathaniel G. Herreshoff

“He picked up the ball of twine and put it to his nose and drew in the smell of boats – caulking smell, rope-locker smell—the smell which, savored in the deepest gloom of wintertime, had the power of evoking faraway sunlit wavetops, a canted mast, splashing bow-waves, a warm summer breeze on a helmsman’s cheek.”

John Hersey

“I was completely overwhelmed. I sank down on my knees and thrust my fingers deep into the dry warm sand. The voyage was over. We were all alive.”

Thor Heyerdahl

“Cruising is more than a sport. The mood of it comes over you at times, and you can neither work nor rest nor heed another call until you have a deck beneath your feet and point a bowsprit out to sea.”

Arthur Sturgis Hildebrand

“The only way to get a good crew is to marry one.”

Eric Hiscock

“When morning came we were plunging through the sunlit sea under winged-out fore and main, the *Dolphin* careering along joyously like a hobbyhorse on the dewy green of an unmowed lawn.”

Desmond Holdridge

“We won the race by twenty-three seconds, and two seconds after we had crossed the line the mast snapped. Which solved the problem of stopping, anyway.”

Philip Holland

“I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving: to reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it -- but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes 1858

The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table

“It was with a happy heart that the good Odysseus spread his sail to catch the wind and used his seamanship to keep his boat straight with the steering-oar.”

Homer

“But now a breeze came up from us astern – a canvas-bellying landbreeze, hale shipmate sent by the singing nymph with sun-bright hair; we made fast the braces, took our thwarts, and let the wind and steersman work the ship with full sail spread all day above our coursing, till the sun dipped, and all the ways grew dark upon the fathomless unresting sea.”

Homer

“...Odysseus spread his sail...while he sat and guided the raft skillfully by means of the rudder. He never closed his eyes, but kept them fixed on the Pleiades, on late-setting Bootes, and on the Bear... which turns round and round where it is, facing Orion, and alone never dipping into the stream of Oceanus – for calypso had told him to keep this to his left. Days seven and ten did he sail over the sea...”

Homer, The Odyssey, ca. 700 BC

“And Telemachus called unto his company and bade them lay hands on the tackling, and they hearkened to his call. So they raised the mast of pine tree and set it in the hole of the cross plank, and made it fast with forestays, and hauled up the white sails with twisted ropes of oxhide. And the wind filled the belly of the sail, and the dark wave seethed loudly round the stem of the running ship, and she fled over the wave, accomplishing her path.”

HomerThe Odyssey

“Where else in the sporting world would the press proclaim as ‘Grand Prix Racing’ the sorry spectacle of twelve men slumped over a wet rail, slogging along at eight knots on a \$ 200,000 object that is obsolete the next season?”

Garry Hoyt

“To the electric excitement when pored-over plans and dull days of practice somehow come together in a racing move that shakes you free of the pack; . . . you cross the fleet and taste the sudden silence and splendid loneliness of first place.”

Gary Hoyt

“In certain places, at certain hours, gazing at the sea is dangerous. It is what looking at a woman sometimes is.”

Victor Hugo

“Our day-in, day-out focus was sailing, not changing the world.”

Anna Seaton Huntington

“A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.”

Henrik Ibsen

“He who lets the sea lull him into a false sense of security is in very grave danger.”

Hammond Innes

“The sea was lashed up into tremendous confusion. There was fearful sullen sound of rushing waves and broken surges. Deep called unto deep. At times the black volume of clouds overhead seemed rent asunder by flashes of lightning, which quivered along the foaming billows, and made the succeeding darkness doubly terrible. The thunders bellowed over the wild waste of waters and were echoed and prolonged by the mountain waves. As I saw the ship staggering and plunging among these roaring caverns, it seemed miraculous that she regained her balance or preserved her buoyancy. Her yards would dip into the water; her bow was almost buried beneath the waves. Sometimes an impending sure appeared ready to overwhelm her, and nothing but a dexterous movement of the helm preserved her from the shock.”

Washington Irving

“My life has narrowed to a single theme – getting through each day till I round the Horn. The rest of the world has ceased to have any meaning. This is my entire life and there is nothing else.”

Naomi James

“Let your boat of life be light, packed with only what you need: a homely home and simple pleasures, one or two friends, worth the name, someone to love and someone to love you, a cat, a dog, and a pipe or two, enough to eat and enough to wear, and a little more than enough to drink; for thirst is a dangerous thing.”

Jerome K. Jerome

“There is no greater thrill than being a board a boat that has successfully defended the Cup.”

Gary Jobson, 1997

“No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned . . . A man in a jail has more room, better food, and commonly better company.”

Samuel Johnson 1709 - 1784

The Anatomy of Melancholy

“He who goes to sea for pleasure would go to Hell for a pastime.”

Samuel Johnson

“When a man comes to like a sea life, he is not fit to live on land.”

Dr. Samuel Johnson

“I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast, for I intend to go in harm’s way”

John Paul Jones

“It is true I run great risk; no gallant action was ever accomplished without danger.”

John Paul Jones

“The fireside is nice and there are those for whom it will be the ultimate Utopia, but the fireside is nicer still when you can remember the joys of an offshore passage and dream of the time when you can go out and do it again.”

Ted Jones

“There’s one thing about bashing to windward. You never forget, for one minute, that you are at sea in a sailing boat.”

Tristan Jones

“If you cannot arrive in daylight, then stand off well clear, all night, and wait until dawn. After all, that’s one of the things God made boats for – to wait in.”

Tristan Jones

“A small craft in the ocean is, or should be, a benevolent dictatorship.”

Tristan Jones

“Each noon when we laid down our latitude, Lewis would ask. “How much farther to Brisbane?” And we would carefully measure from the little cross on the chart in miles, then roughly converted the miles into hours, and hours into literature, and answer: “One biography, two detective stories, four Saturday Evening Posts and two Reader’s Digests from Brisbane.” Finally when we were only two mystery stories from the continent, we started the motor.”

Ray Kauffman

“I stood in the companionway with the warmth from the galley stove against my back and, facing the cold fresh breeze, watched the dark water slowly drown the blinking lights, and Australia was gone.”

Ray Kauffman

“... and the water was as unfathomable as the black holes between the stars at night.”

Ray Kauffman

“A small boat and a suitcase full of money beats a 40 footer tied to the Bank every time.”

Rick Kennerly's Rule #1

“In the long run, all solutions are temporary, so go ahead and use duct tape.” Garrison Keillor

“No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit.”
Helen Keller

“There’s one rich man on board and there’s twenty-five poor men and they enjoy it more than the rich man does.”
Jim Kilroy,
When asked if yacht racing is a rich man’s sport

“ ‘difficulties’ is the name given to things which it is our business to overcome.”
Admiral Ernest J. King

“Many people develop a kind of love-hate relationship with the spinnaker, and it has often been said that this sail is the easiest to hoist but requires the most courage.” R. “Bunty” King

“I set thee high for a star in the heavens, a sign and hope for the seamen.”
Charles Kingsley Andromeda

“There is something about boats which makes one feel they are living creatures – each as different from her sisters as human beings are from each other. The very fact that one refers to a boat as “she” shows that since time began men have loved their boats.”
Francis Kinney

“This new ship here is fitted according to the reported increase of knowledge among mankind. Namely, she is cumbered end to end, with bells and trumpets and clock and wires, . . . it has been told to me, she can call voices out of the air of the waters to con the ship while her crew sleep.

But sleep thou lightly. It has not yet been told to me that the Sea has ceased to be the Sea.”

Rudyard Kipling

“Was there ever a sailor free to choose that didn’t settle somewhere near the sea?”

Rudyard Kipling

“It’s ‘Gang-plank up and in,’ dear lass

It’s ‘Hawsers warp her through!’

Andit’s ‘All clear aft’ on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,

We’re backing down on the Long Trail – the trail that is always new.”

Rudyard Kipling

“The America’s Cup is a race of management, money, technology, teamwork, and last and incidentally, sailing.”

Bill Koch, 1996

“Sailing is a good sport. You don’t have to beat up the other guy like you do in boxing or football; you just try to outsmart him, and outsail him, and then you go out and have a beer with him.”

John Kolius

Samuel Knox-Johnson commenting on the silly talk or writing he sometimes comes across about sailor’s conquering the sea’.

“Now one ever does that. It’s always left on the battlefield; you’re not. You might escape unscathed, but you never conquer it.”

Samuel Knox-Johnson

Winner, 1968 Golden Globe Round the World Race

“The pleasures of being becalmed had been worn threadbare;

there is a limit to untutored stargazing. . .”

Charles Landery

“I wriggled into my sleeping bag and gave the wood by my ear an approving pat. Damning all hotel rooms, I went to sleep.”

Charles Landery

“On the eight day, Sam . . . tinkered with the engine in a forlorn way, passing the time, really, while I, being of little faith, loafed and mocked. Perhaps it was the mockery and perhaps it was the ability of the others; but probably it was just cussedness that brought the engine to life with a roar. It was not a man-eating, red-blooded roar, however; just the cry of a lion turned vegetarian and very uncertain of himself.”

Charles Landery

“You are not going to find the ideal boat. You are not even going to have it if you design it from scratch.”

Carl Lane

“Confronting a storm is like fighting God. All the powers in the universe seem to be against you and, in an extraordinary way, your irrelevance is at the same time both humbling and exalting.”

Francoise Legrande

“Always sail defensively in fog, and keep in mind that you may run across people who don’t know what they are doing.”

Perry Lewis

“Fog is very terrible. It comes about you before you realize and you are suddenly blind and dumb and cold.”

Anne Morrow Lindberg

“Does anyone know Where the love of God goes, When the waves Turn the minutes to Hours?”

Gordon Lightfoot

The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald

“The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down of the big lake they called "Gitche Gumee.”

The lake, it is said, never gives up her dead when the skies of November turn gloomy.

With a load of iron ore twenty-six thousand tons more than the Edmund Fitzgerald weighed empty,
that good ship and true was a bone to be chewed when the "Gales of November" came early.

The ship was the pride of the American side coming back from some mill in Wisconsin.

As the big freighters go, it was bigger than most with a crew and good captain well seasoned,
concluding some terms with a couple of steel firms when they left fully loaded for Cleveland.

And later that night when the ship's bell rang, could it be the north wind they'd been feelin'?

The wind in the wires made a tattle-tale sound and a wave broke over the railing.

And ev'ry man knew, as the captain did too 'twas the witch of November come stealin'.

The dawn came late and the breakfast had to wait when the Gales of November came slashin'.

When afternoon came it was freezin' rain in the face of a hurricane west wind.

When suppertime came the old cook came on deck sayin'. "Fellas, it's too rough t'feed ya."

At seven P.M. a main hatchway caved in; he said, "Fellas, it's bin good t'know ya!"

The captain wired in he had water comin' in and the good ship and crew was in peril.

And later that night when 'is lights went outta sight came the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald.

Does any one know where the love of God goes when the waves turn the minutes to hours?

The searchers all say they'd have made Whitefish Bay if they'd put fifteen more miles behind 'er.

They might have split up or they might have capsized; they may have broke deep and took water.

And all that remains is the faces and the names of the wives and the sons and the daughters.

Lake Huron rolls, Superior sings in the rooms of her ice-water mansion.

Old Michigan steams like a young man's dreams; the islands and bays are for sportsmen.

And farther below Lake Ontario takes in what Lake Erie can send her,

And the iron boats go as the mariners all know with the Gales of November remembered.

In a musty old hall in Detroit they prayed, in the "Maritime Sailors' Cathedral."

The church bell chimed 'til it rang twenty-nine times for each man on the Edmund Fitzgerald.

The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down of the big lake they call "Gitche Gumee."

"Superior," they said, "never gives up her dead when the gales of November come early!"

Gordon Lightfoot

The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald

“The acquisition of the knowledge of navigation has a strange effect on the minds of men.”

Jack London

“To touch that how is to rest one’s hand on the cosmic nose of things.”

Jack London

The Cruise of the *Snark*

“I have built barns and houses and I know the peculiar trait such things have of running past their estimated cost. This knowledge was mine, was already mine, when I estimated the probable cost of the building of the *Snark* at \$ 7,000. Well, she cost \$ 30,000. Now, don’t ask me, please. It is the truth. I signed the checks and raised the money. Of course, there is no explaining it.”

Jack London

“That is why I got a small boat of my own, so that I can poke along at my leisure, visiting remote corners of the earth and actually seeing how the other half of the world lives.”

Dwight Long

“I’ll take a crew of experienced sailors. Each of them will know intuitively where all the gear is stowed. He knows the perils of eating or drinking too much. Or too little. He can steer, plot, handle sail and navigate. He never drops shaving brushes into the toilet bowl. He has single-handed on occasion. He is neat and seamanlike. Silent without being morose. Doesn’t whistle. Knows how tired I am and stands my watches without complaint. Naturally, my ideal crew would consist entirely of skippers.”

Alfred E. Loomis

“A comfortable boat, it now seemed to me, was one which, in offshore cruising, would round a headland with a certain amount of discomfort and be snug in harbor while the beamy family boat was still slogging into it.”

Alfred Loomis

“On a breathless night there is something in the lazy drone of the motor and the undeviating wake of phosphorescent water stretching out astern that gets me almost as much as the keener joys of sailing. Every revolution of the propeller means something, and every mile puts us in a more favorable position to employ the wind when it comes in again.”

Alfred Loomis

“To get an idea of the (hurricane) stresses . . . boats, experienced, nonsailors might try to visualize a never-ending series of five or six story buildings, with sloping sides of various angles and with occasional buildings half as high again, moving toward them at about forty miles an hour. Some of the time, the top one or two stories of the buildings will collapse on top of them. The concussive effect of seawater isn’t much different from that of concrete. Add the isolation and the noise – the boom and roar of the waves, the deafening, unearthly, unnerving scream of wind around the obstructions of mast and rigging – and the picture should become clearer.”

Derek Lundy Godforsaken Sea

“Laurent mentioned to me with no irony that he had been able to fix something on his boat one day between Australia and Cape Horn because the weather was quite good. When I asked what that meant, he said that the wind had dropped to thirty to thirty-five knots sustained and the seas were below twenty-five feet. To me, and to most sailors, those are severe and potentially dangerous conditions.”

Derek Lundy Godforsaken Sea

“Going up the mast used to be a routine part of the sailor’s job. Almost all the sails on a square-rigger had to be reefed or furled by men who went aloft, up the windward ratlines on the standing rigging, and then out along the yardarms, feet braced against the monkeylines, bellies and chests laid across the wildly rolling yards, wrestling with the recalcitrant, flogging canvas. A sailor who fell was a dead man if he hit the deck. Those working at the ends of the yardarms stood a slightly better chance because they were more likely to fall into the sea. It was occasionally possible to recover a man overboard, though not often at night or in bad weather. In high latitudes, frostbite was routine. The hard, heavy sails had to be pounded into submission with fists that soon bled. Sails on square-riggers were always bloodstained. The men could spend most of a day or night at a time up there in cold and gale if many sails had to be reefed, furled, or reset at the same time. The topsail or skysail yardarms might be 150 feet above deck. The crew went up in all weather. There wasn’t any choice – that was the only way the sails could be handled. Still, it was often exhilarating and a source of pride: who but real bluewater sailors – the iron men – could hand and reef aloft under any conditions?”

Derek Lundy

Godforsaken Sea

“The human heart is like a ship on a stormy sea driven about by winds blowing from all four corners of heaven.”

Martin Luther

“The clink of an anchor chain, the ‘yo-ho!’ of a well time crew, the flapping of huge sails – I love all these sounds.”

John ‘Rob Roy’ MacGregor

“It was a strange and pleasant life for me all summer, sailing entirely alone by sea and river . . .”

John MacGregor 1867

The Voyage Alone in the Yawl Rob Roy

“Of all those I have met with who have traveled on land or sea alone, not one has told me it was ‘lonely’.”

John MacGregor

“The perfection of a yacht’s beauty is that nothing should be there for only beauty’s sake.”

John MacGregor

“The sea is dangerous and it’s storms terrible, but these obstacles have never been sufficient reasons to remain ashore . . . unlike the mediocre, intrepid spirits seek victory over those things which seem impossible . . . it is with an iron will that they embark on the most daring of all endeavors . . . to meet the shadowy future without fear and conquer the unknown.”

Ferdinand Magellan

“I suppose I must be one of the few men alive who can remember what life was like in the American Navy of sailing ships. All those fine old ships have sailed away into the Land of Dreams, mounting the swell like great birds. No smoke, no vibration, no noise except the occasional slatting of a reef point against the sail.”

Rear Admiral Daniel Mannix III

“To me, nothing made by man is more beautiful than a sailboat under way in fine weather, and to be on that sailboat is to be as close to heaven as I expect to get. It is unalloyed happiness.”

Robert Manry

“The sea had its drawbacks, though: there was no doubt about that. It couldn't give a formal education (or even a well-balanced informal one), or love or a helping hand when you needed it. The sea was cold, disinterested, impartial. There was no real warmth to it, no sharing of knowledge or feelings. And yet there was one hugely wonderful thing to be said for the sea: it was always the sea. It was the sea and nothing else. It couldn't dissimulate. It couldn't say one thing while thinking another. It couldn't flatter you and turn your head. There wasn't a treacherous or dishonest wave in its whole massive body.”

Robert Manry

“It is impossible, in this world, to achieve an idea; and if you do not believe this, I recommend you to take a picture of your perfect ship out of your mind’s eye and try to copy it exactly in metal and canvas and wood.”

Weston Martyr

“A lot of sentimental rubbish has been written and is being written about sailing vessels. The bulk of this tripe is perpetuated by people who have never had to hang on by their navels to an upper topsail yard in a breeze of wind.”

Weston Martyr

“I have had to pass a considerable portion of my life aboard small craft of various kinds, and after a long and mixed experience of the life, I have come to two very definite conclusions concerning it. One is that life on a small boat in fine weather is the only kind of life worth living. The other is that, in bad weather, it’s just plain hell.”

Weston Martyr

“I must go down to the seas again, To the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship And a star to steer her by . . .”
And the wheel’s kick and the wind’s song and the white sail’s shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea’s face and a grey dawn breaking.

John Masefield Sea Fever

“I must go down to the sea again
For the call of the running tide
It’s a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied.”

John Masefield

“Men in a ship are always looking up, and men ashore generally looking down.”

John Masefield
The Bird of Dawning

“Off Cape Horn there are but two kinds of weather, neither one of them a pleasant kind.”

John Masefield

“The way in which land is picked up from the deck or rigging of a small craft is always a fascinating one. The land does not slowly appear out of mist, nor does it come suddenly to stand boldly on the horizon. Rather, it first appears as a vision, as a happy portent arriving out of thin air, out of a vastness of space, to lie with utter humility upon the curved lip of the sea. First, it is not there, then, at the flick of an eyelash, there it is, a flimsy mirage that may or may not be more than a low and wandering cloud.”

Richard Maury

“We saw her first from the top of the cliff. She turned at her chains to every attack of wind, swaying, airy, and buoyant, as through cut of fragile porcelain on the sea below. She was a two-masted schooner. . .”

Richard Maury

The Saga of Cimba, 1939

“The land seemed to reach out, to gauntlet the schooner, to strip her of her freedom, of her illusions as well as her sails, of her slight but immaculate power.”

Richard Maury

“At a quarter of two, the long awaited for appeared. The *Cimba* climbed a wave, and looking far to windward, I saw a black shape reared from horizon to horizon. As we dropped down a slope, I knew we were fated to meet the greatest sea I had ever come upon.”

Richard Maury

“More than the manners of polite society distinguished the life of a naval officer, his character was expected to be above reproach, his life a full testament to the enduring virtues of an officer and a gentleman. Those virtues were not necessarily as many as those required of clergy. An officer’s honor could admit some vices, and many officers, my father and grandfather included, indulged more than a few. But honor would not permit even rare or small transgressions of the code of conduct that was expected to be as natural a part of an officer’s life as was his physical description.

An officer must not lie, steal, or cheat – ever. He keeps his word, whatever the cost. He must not shirk his duties no matter how difficult or dangerous they are. His life is ransomed to his duty. An officer must trust his fellow officers, and expect their trust in return. He must not expect others to bear what he will not.

An officer accepts the consequences of his actions. He must not hide his mistakes, nor transfer blame to others that is rightfully his. He admits his mistakes openly, and accepts whatever sanction is imposed upon him without complaint.

For the obedience he is owed by his subordinates, an officer accepts certain solemn obligations to them in return, and an officer’s obligations to enlisted men are the most solemn of all. An officer must not confer his responsibilities on the men under his command. They are his alone. He does not put his men in jeopardy for any purpose that their country has not required they serve. He does not risk their lives and welfare for his sake, but only to answer the shared duty they are called to answer. He will not harm their reputations by his conduct or cause them to suffer shame or any penalty that only he deserves. My father once said, “some officers get it backwards. They don’t understand that we are responsible for our men, not the other way around. That’s what forges trust and loyalty.”

An officer accepts these and his many other responsibilities with gratitude. They are his honor. Any officer who stains his honor by violating these standards forfeits the respect of his fellow officers and no longer deserves to be included in their ranks. His presence among them is offensive and threatens the integrity of the service.”

John McCain

Faith Of Our Fathers

“Going to sea has all of the advantages of suicide without any of the inconveniences.”

William McFee

“There is a pleasure unknown to the landsman in reading at sea.”

William McFee

“When I was just learning to race, my father kept saying to me, “Son, if you want to do well in this sport, be first at the start, stay out in front, and increase your lead.”

Buddy Melges

“Sailboat racing becomes a game of chance only when you are not prepared.”

Buddy Melges

“Why is almost every robust, healthy boy with a robust, healthy soul in him, at some time or other, crazy to go to sea? Why, upon your first voyage as a passenger, did you feel such a mystical vibration, when first told that you and your ship were now out of sight of land?”

Herman Melville Moby Dick

“Call me Ishmael. Some years ago - never mind how long precisely - having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off - then, I account it high time to get to the sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.”

H. Melville Moby Dick 1851

“There never was a great man yet who spent all his life inland.” Herman Melville

“There is, one knows not what sweet mystery about this sea, whose gently awful stirrings seem to speak of some hidden soul beneath.” Herman Melville Moby Dick

“Flatter not yourself that good luck is judgment and discretion, for all your eggs could have foundered if the spirit of the sea had just said the word.” Herman Melville

“Familiarity with danger makes a brave man braver, but less daring. Thus with seamen: he who goes the oftenest round Cape Horn goes the most circumspectly.” Herman Melville

“Whose nature inclines them toward the restlessness and the art of sailing.”

Something else appeals to them so that they abandon their studies to follow their natural inclinations.”

Juan Escalante de Mendoza

16th Century

“Some say, he bid his angels turn askance	The poles of earth twice ten degrees or more
From the sun's axle; they with labour push'd	Oblique the centric globe: some say, the sun
Was bid turn reins from th' equinoctial road	Like distant breadth to Taurus with the seven
Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,	Up to the Tropic Crab; thence down amain
By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,	As deep as Capricorn, to bring in change
Of seasons to each clime.”	John Milton "Paradise Lost"

“No aspect of the sailor’s world is more mysterious to the landsman than the practice of navigation. To find a precise point in a trackless waste seems neither art nor science, but magic. Yet in no other sphere of progress has the continuity of development been so clearly based on the heritage of the past, nor has the accumulated knowledge been so universally shared by men of all races , creeds and nations.”

Carleton Mitchell

“The trickiest part of a voyage or cruise may turn out to be the short leg between any harbor entrance and dock, both on the way in and the way out.”

Carleton Mitchell

“A great cape, for us, can’t be expressed in longitude and latitude alone. A great cape has a soul, with very soft, very violent shadows and colors. A soul as smooth as a child’s as hard as a criminal’s. And that is why we go.”

Bernard Moitessier

“Life is too short to splice wire rope.”

Bernard Moitessier

“A sailor’s joys are as simple as a child’s.”

Bernard Moitessier

“I hate storms, but calms undermine my spirits.”

Bernard Moitessier

“Sailors, with their built-in sense of order, service, and discipline, should really be running the world.”

Nicholas Monsarrat

“The sea evokes in me infinite thoughts and moods; serenity, turmoil, the beginnings of life, the unconquerable end. Majestic, awesome, often cruel but always indescribably beautiful.”

Ricardo Montalban

“Never a ship sails out of the bay, but carries my heart as a stowaway.”

Roselle Mercier Montgomery

“And I advise all sound cruisers to anchor properly in a harbor, not tie up at a “marina”, the yachtsmen’s slum.”

Samuel Eliot Morrison

“The sea belongs to us all, and every aspect of it, from halcyon calm to howling hurricane, is fraught with beauty.”

Samuel Eliot Morrison

“But nobody has found a substitute for the sweet chuckling of water like the laughter of young girls, that you hear outside the hull while lying in a small yacht’s bunk.”

Samuel Eliot Morrison

“You have no right to own a yacht if you ask that question.”

J.P. Morgan, Sr.

In answer to a question by Henry Clay Peirce regarding
how much it costs to own and run a yacht.

“This is no democracy. However, I do like to hear any well thought out, reasonable suggestion. Once.”

Bus Mosbacher

“*Happy Adventure* pattered blindly on into the dark and brooding murk and I was soon fog-chilled, unutterably lonely, and scared to death. Since rum is a known and accepted antidote for all three conditions I took a long, curative drink for each separate ailment.”

Farley Mowat

“According to mythology the virtue of these engines lies in the fact that they are simple and reliable. Although this myth is widely believed, I am able to report that it is completely untrue. These engines are, in fact, vindictive, debased, black-minded ladies of no virtue and any non-Newfoundlander who goes shipmate with one is either a fool or a masochist, and is likely both.”

Farley Mowat

“No more expensive way of going really slowly has been invented by man than sailing.”

Gary Mull

“The responsibility of the Commanding Officer for his or her command is absolute . . . The authority of the Commanding Officer is commensurate with his or her responsibility. While the CO may ... delegate authority . . ., such delegation . . . shall in no way relieve continued responsibility for the safety, well-being and efficiency of the entire command.”

Navy Regulations Article 0802

“On the day we lost the cereal account I finally decided to go to sea.”

Eric Newby

The Last Grain Race

“What I was trying to tell her, and all my friends and family, was that a profound change had taken place inside me. Sailors who cross the oceans call it a “sea change.” It happens days into a voyage, when you lose sight of land and stop feeling seasick. Time no longer exists; nothing matters except the path you’re following, the sky, and the rolling water. It doesn’t happen to everyone. But those who undergo the sea change are transformed forever, reborn in a new element.”

Dr. Jerri Nielsen Icebound

“To insure safety at sea, the best that science can devise and that naval organization can provide must be regarded only as an aid, and never as a substitute for good seamanship, self-reliance, and sense of ultimate responsibility which are the first requisites in a seaman and naval officer.”

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz

“God grant me the courage not to give up what I think is right even though I think it is hopeless.”

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz

“When you’re in command, command.”

Admiral Nimitz

“It is far better to spend one more lumpy, safe night at sea than to stand on in, risking your vessel and everyone aboard, just for the sake of reaching smooth water, or to be able to say you got in a day earlier.”

Ross Norgrove

“The ocean . . . exemplifies the background against which, both at the start and at the finish, we see our lives as cast.”

Charlton Ogburn, Jr.

“It’s scary to have a 30 foot wave chasing you. If you’re steering, you don’t look back. The crew looks back for you, and you watch their faces. When they look straight up, get ready.”

Magnus Olsson

“I lay on the bowsprit, facing astern, with the water foaming into spume under me, the masts with every sail white in the moonlight, towering high above me. I became drunk with the beauty and the singing rhythm of it, and for a moment I lost myself – actually lost my life. I was set free! I dissolved in the sea, became white sails and flying spray, became beauty and rhythm, become moonlight and the ship and the high dim-starred sky! I belonged, without past or future, within place and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of man, to Life itself. To God, if you want to put it that way.”

Eugene O’Neill

“Protesting the New York Yacht Club is like complaining about your wife to your mother-in-law.”

Sir Frank Packer

“The single commandment of anchoring is “Thou shalt create scope.” Reese Palley

“Sailors have made a good bargain with the world. We get to borrow it, play with it and be released from its deadening grip. We get to use it without owning it.” Reese Palley

“Cruising sailors make lists like stagnant water makes mosquitoes.” Reese Palley

“No amount of skill, no equipment, and no boat will keep you from disaster if you don’t develop the most important seagoing skill of all, a complete fear of falling overboard.”

Lin and Larry Pardey

“If you can’t repair it, maybe it shouldn’t be on board.” Lin and Larry Pardey

“I loved cruising the coast of Maine. For one thing, it helped me conquer my fear of fog. Not that I have learned to feel secure in the fog, but at least I have learned how to grope without panic.”

Herb Payson

"Money is not the only thing one has to spend; the other thing is life. The difference is that you never know how much is in the bank, or what your balance is. Your life is your inheritance. As soon as you realize this, you start trying to spend your life wisely."

Herb Payson.

Advice to the Sealomn

“And men go forth, and admire lofty mountains and broad seas, and roaring torrents, and the course of the stars, and forget their own selves in doing so.”

Petrach

“Voyager upon life’s sea; to yourself be true,
And what’er your lot may be, paddle your own canoe.”

Dr. Edward P. Philpots, 1844

“You can sail for one day, can’t you?”

That’s all it is - one day after another.”

Harry Pidgeon

“And then again, when you sit at the helm of your little ship on a clear night, and gaze at the countless stars overhead, and realize that you are quite alone on a wide, wide sea, it is apt to occur to you that in the general scheme of things you are merely an insignificant speck on the surface of the ocean; and you are not nearly so important nor so self-sufficient as you thought you were. Which is an exceedingly wholesome thought, and one that may effect a permanent change in your deportment that will be greatly appreciated by your friends.”

James S. Pitkin

“If you have never been at sea in a heavy gale, you can form no idea of the confusion of mind occasioned by the wind and spray together. They blind, deafen, and strangle you, and take away all power of action or reflection.”

Edgar Allan Poe

“A ship is different from anyplace on earth. It’s dangerous at sea, as you’ve surely grasped by now. Dangerous, and separate. A captain has absolute power out there, extending -- and it still does -- to death. To trust a man with the lives of others is a grave thing. Only three principles make it work. Authority; responsibility; accountability.

Authority is the root of command. We delegate it only for a time, only in exercise of an office, only as defined by custom and law. Never as an individual, never for very long, never as if by right, never without bounds.

Responsibility defines what a man is trusted with, with the ship, with the conn, whatever. So it’s all clear, up front, and everybody understands his duty.

To be accountable means to be subject to justice. To punishment, if you will. If you fail your trust -- are derelict in your duty, misuse your power, make a professional error -- you will pay a price.

In our profession, this accountability is absolute. When a naval officer accepts authority, he knows he will answer for the actions of his ship, whether or not he is directly and personally responsible in the way a civilian court would understand. For it is his responsibility to know and govern all that goes on aboard her, her flaws, her limitations, as well as her strengths.

If error occurs, no matter whose, the fault is rightfully and inevitably his. Each commander knows this and accepts it as part of the job. No previous service, however meritorious, can make up for it.”

David Poyer

The Circle

“Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm.”

Syrus Publilius

“The only reason that *Uldra’s* engine never failed was because she did not have one.”

Dennis Puleston

“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.”

Psalms 107

“The sound of the chain dragging along the bottom brought me to my senses quicker than a bucket of cold water.”

E.A. Pye

“Of course I am lonely at sea, but one suffers less on the ocean in that respect than in the heart of London.”

Sir Walter Raleigh

“For the first time, and not on paper and in dreams, I had the little ship alone in my hands in a night of velvet dark below and stars above, pushing steadily along into unknown waters. I was extremely happy”.

Arthur Ransome

“The klop, klop of water under the bows of a small boat will cure most troubles in this world, and if another small boat is klop, klopping along within talking distance, and first one and then the other seems to be getting the best out of the wind, worries, however bad, simply disappear.”

Arthur Ransome

“The desire to build a house is the tired wish of a man content thenceforward with a single anchorage. The desire to build a boat is the desire of youth, unwilling yet to accept the idea of a final resting place.”

Arthur Ransome

“One cannot change the direction of the wind. They can, however, trim their sails.”

“Mike Reed”

“In no other trade or calling can you discover such men who have been tempered and formed by their daily environment, the sea.”

Douglas Reeman

“Yacht design, as carried on at present, is rather like making love to a woman. The approach is completely empirical. At the end, the male, even though he might be successful, usually had no idea of just how and why he had succeeded.”

Prof. E.J. Richards

“Now and again when we rose on the inflated crest of a glassy swell I could see the protruding end of a buoy stuck like a splinter in the flat hand of the sea.”

Joe Richards

“No matter how important a man at sea may consider himself, unless he is fundamentally worthy the sea will someday find him out.”
Felix Riesenberg

“No literature is richer than that of the sea. No story is more enthralling, no tradition is more secure.”
Felix Riesenberg

“Overhead, the white sails stretched their arms to catch the night wind. They were my sails – my wings – and they had brought me to the sea of my boyhood dreams.”
Williams Robinson

“How serene to be alone on a well-loved boat on an easy beam reach in smooth water!”
William Robinson

“Again and again that night, I asked myself why I was there – and had no better answer than that perhaps this was the very thing that had drawn me into this voyage: an unexpressed urge to experience a real Cape Horn gale.”
William A. Robinson

“At night, like a slumbering giant of mythology, the trade wind breathed more softly. But with the coming of the sun it heaved a sigh, rolled over, and soon assumed the deeper and more powerful breathing of a man at work.”
William Robinson

“It is infinitely easier to shake out a reef when one is bored, than it is to tie one in when one is scared.”
Raul Ronin

“Ships are the nearest things to dreams that hands have ever made, for somewhere deep in their oaken hearts the soul of a song is laid.”
Robert N. Rose My Ship O' Dreams

“And a sailor you must be if you’re going to try ocean voyaging. You’ll need a modicum of sailing aptitude, some grasp of mechanical concepts, and a willingness to pitch in and work. Most veteran world sailors fall into the classification of restless adventurers who are always looking at distant horizons.”

Hal Roth After 50,000 Miles

“Not only is the sea unspoiled and without artificiality, there is a primeval quality, a purity surrounding its environment. Maybe you appreciate the sea because when you are lost upon its vastness your life is not jammed up with the trivia the meaningless detail, and the foolish stuff of civilization.”

Hal Roth

“The elation that is felt at speed, running before the wind and sea, may be so great as to overcome the seamanlike caution the ocean demands, but sooner or later the sea will catch up with you.”

Hal Roth

“Long ocean passages usually don’t require an engine; it’s the ports and headlands at each end that may demand some expert sailing.”

Hal Roth

“This is one of the very few sports whose techniques never quite match the demands. Throughout a sailing career, we never stop finding new skills to master and new problems to solve.”

John Rousmaniere

“The virtues of the discomfort of an ocean-racing yacht – wet clothes, lack of sleep, bunk sharing and the constant pressure to outrace frequently invisible competitors – are difficult to explain yet addictive. For the men and women who keep returning to the Fastnet and other long-distance races until they are on the verge of old age, the lure is not the hope of winning trophies. Perhaps the sport provides a means of rediscovering some lost part of their primitive nature, unsullied by civilized life.”

John Rousmaniere

“Men who cannot enter into the mind of the sea, cannot for the same reason enter into the mind of ships.”

John Ruskin

“A sailor’s wonderfully handy about the house.”

Dorothy Sayers

“Below forty degrees south there is no law;

Below fifty degrees south there is no God.”

Old Sailor’s Saying

“Below fifty degrees south there is no law;

Below sixty degrees south there is no God.”

Old Sailor’s Saying

“. . . Yet still, even more now, my spirit within me

Drives me seaward to sail the deep,

To ride the long swell of the salt sea waves.

Never a day but my heart's desire

Would launch me forth on the long sea path . . .”

“The Seafarer” circa. 900's

“In the Great Age of Velcro, rope, knots, and all things done with them seem charmingly irrelevant. Then you step aboard a sailboat and realize that the rules have changed.”

David Seidman

“If a man does not know to what port he is steering, no wind is favorable to him.” Seneca

“Unfathomable Sea! Whose waves are years!

Ocean of time, whose waters of deep woe are brackish with the salt of human tears!

Thou shoreless flood which in thy ebb and flow claspest the limits of mortality...

Percy Bysshe Shelley

“We're out here at on the sea's sufferance - not as equals, certainly not as challengers. Because the sea can't lose. Only we can lose.”

Greg Sherwood

“Ideals are like stars. You will not succeed in touching them with your hands, but like the seafaring man on the ocean desert of waters, you choose them as your guides, and following them, you reach your destiny.”

Carl Schurz

“The classic specifications for the design of a good cruising boat contain the elements of ease of handling, crew safety, good steering control, balance, ample stability, speed, and accommodations that are both functional and comfortable.”

Bill Shaw

“Cruisers don't have plans, just intentions.”

David Skillings

“To know the laws that govern the winds, and to know that you know them, will give you an easy mind on your voyage round the world; otherwise, you may tremble at the appearance of every cloud.”

Joshua Slocum Sailing Alone Around the World

“Waves dancing joyously across Massachusetts Bay met the sloop coming out, to dash themselves instantly into myriads of sparkling gems that hung across her breast at every surge. The day was perfect, the sunlight clear and strong. Every particle of water thrown into the air became a gem, and a Spray, making good her name as she danced ahead, snatched necklace after necklace from the seam and as often threw them away.”

Joshua Slocum April 24, 1895

“As for myself, the wonderful sea charmed me from the first.” Joshua Slocum

Sailing Alone Around the World

“The days pass happily with me wherever my ship sails.” Joshua Slocum

“I was born in the breezes, and I had studied the sea as perhaps few men have studied it, neglecting all else.”

Joshua Slocum

“To young men contemplating a voyage I would say go.” Joshua Slocum

“The waves rose high, but I had a good ship. Still, in the dismal fog I felt myself drifting into loneliness, an insect on a straw in the midst of the elements.” Joshua Slocum

“I once knew a writer who, after saying beautiful things about the sea, passed through a Pacific hurricane, and he became a changed man.”

Joshua Slocum

“I sailed with a free wind day after day, marking the position of my ship on the chart with considerable precision . . . For one whole month my vessel held her course true; I had not, the while, so much as a light in the binnacle. The Southern Cross I saw every night abeam; the sun every morning came up astern; every evening it went down ahead. I wished for no other compass to guide me, for these were true. If I doubted my reckoning after a long time at sea I verified it by reading the clock aloft made by the Great Architect, and it was right.”

Joshua Slocum

Sailing Alone Round the World

“When anyone asks me how I can best describe my experience in nearly forty years at sea, I merely say, uneventful. Of course there have been winter gales, and storms and fog and the like. But in all my experience, I have never been in any accident ... of any sort worth speaking about. I have seen but one vessel in distress in all my years at sea. I never saw a wreck and never have been wrecked nor was I ever in any predicament that threatened to end in disaster of any sort.”

Edward J. Smith, 1907

Captain, RMS Titanic

(struck iceberg and went to the bottom just five years later)

“Today; yachtsmen all over the world are perpetuating the traditional skills of the romantic era of sail that are their rightful heritage.”

Hervey Garrett Smith

“In splicing, practice makes perfect, and in the doing you will learn more than from reading any ten books on the subject.”

Hervey Garrett Smith

“Upon acquiring his first boat the yachtsman discovers that its use is going to involve intimate, personal contact with rope and cordage, and to a far greater extent than he ever anticipated.”

Hervey Garrett Smith

The Arts of the Sailor

“To be locked up in a small, unprivate, jostling space capsule with strange people for several weeks is like being placed in a culture breeding flask in a laboratory Any small infection is bound to wax, swell, and break out in epidemic proportions. The ideal crewmember is a rare creature indeed. He has the coolness, courage and derring-do of James Bond; the inventiveness and mechanical skills of Tom Swift; the agility and strength of an Olympic decathlon winner; and the winning ways and affableness of a graduate summa cum laude of the Dale Carnegie Institute of charm.”

William Snaith

“Just as beauty in woman creates allure and inspires affection, so it does in a boat.”

William Snaith

Each boat seems to contain a personality which manifests itself in the way she takes a sea.”

William Snaith

“At last, the god-damned engine is silent.”

William Snaith

“... sailing in warm conditions with clouds coming at us like balls in a bowling alley.”

Grant Spanhake

“There’s never been a collision between two ships 10,000 yards apart.

Lieutenant Ron Speers, USN

“My idea of getting off in a boat is to get as far away from telephones as possible.”

Roderick Stephens

“For will anyone dare to tell me that business is more entertaining than fooling among boats? He must have never seen a boat, or never seen an office, who says so.”

Robert Louis Stevenson

“One thing had impressed us deeply on this little voyage: the great world dropped away very quickly . . . The matters of great importance we had left were not important . . . We had lost the virus, or it had been eaten by the anti-bodies of quiet. Our pace had slowed greatly; the hundred thousand small reactions of our daily world were reduced to very few.”

John Steinbeck

“The sea finds out everything you did wrong.”

Francis Stokes

“Whenever your preparations for sea are poor the sea worms its way in and finds the problems.”

Francis Stokes

“The approaching storm turns the surface of the sea to steel and silver. Only danger reflects clearly from such a mirror.”

Hayden Stone

“Revenge and deep water have much in common. A man may get sucked down into either and drown before he understands the true danger.”

Hayden Stone

“I will go back to the great sweet mother, mother and lover of men, the sea”

Swinburne

“A man who is not afraid of the sea will soon be drowned, he said, for he will be going out on a day he shouldn't. But we do be afraid of the sea, and we do only be drowned (sic) now and again.”

John Synge

“It is well to moor your bark with two anchors.”

Publilius Syrus

ca. 50 BC

“The points of destination are only worth seeking out because of the journey required to reach them. Wherever I may be, if I were told to stay there, even paradise would become hell to me. The thought of having to leave somewhere touches me and endears it to me. And so it is that each time I bury a dream, so quickly forgotten, only to yearn for a new one.”

Bogdan Szafraniec

“... every master and pilot prided himself on knowing exactly how much way his ship was making. He knew the ship, he considered the wind, he watched the sails, he watched the water. In fact, it was a matter which just could not be explained to the landsman. A good sailor knew his ship, and that was all.”
E.G.R. Taylor

“It is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.”
Alfred Tennyson, "Ulysses"

“The sail, the play of its pulse so like our own lives: so thin and yet so full of life, so noiseless when it labors hardest, so noisy and impatient when least effective.”
Henry David Thoreau

“A collision at sea can ruin your entire day.”
Thucydides The History of the Peloponnesian War

"Ah life; the endless realization of an infinite dream..."
Thomas Tigue

“Although it smacks of seamanlike efficiency; to say that we got our anchor and sailed out is not strictly accurate. It leaves much unsaid.”
H.W. Tilman

“The sea’s most powerful spell is romance.”
H.W. Tilman

“There is something about a voyage you are barely aware of while you are making it.”

H.M. Tomlinson

“It is the last word in the lexicon of sailormen. There Nature has arranged trials and tribulations so ingeniously that in the van of all synonyms for sea cruelty and hardship is the ironbound name of Cape Horn. Winds blow elsewhere as strongly as they do south of fifty. Seas elsewhere may pyramid as high, break as heavily. There may be places equally remote and as bleakly lonely. Currents in other regions may be as adverse. These foes the sailorman may encounter and best, but always in his heart he will wonder if he could face all combined.”

Warwick C. Tompkins

“Whether the weather be fine, Or whether the weather be not; . . . We’ll weather the weather, Whatever the weather; Whether we like it or not!”

Traditional British School Rhyme

“Like it’s still tied to the dock!”

Ted Turner,

when asked how the new 12 meter Mariner sailed

“The chance for mistakes is about equal to the number of crew squared.”

Ted Turner

The Generic Forecast: “Probable nor’easter to sou’west winds, varying to the southward and westward and eastward and points between; high and low barometer, sweeping round from place to place; probable areas of rain, snow, hail and drought, succeeded or preceded by earthquakes with thunder and lightning.”

Mark Twain

“Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you did not do than by the things you did do. So, throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

Mark Twain

“In the sea, I realize the hidden purposes of all things.”

Liv Ullmann

“You have to go out. You don’t have to come back.”

U.S. Coast Guard
Unofficial Motto

“The first lesson a yachtsman should learn is to join the ropes together, sailor fashion.”

Vanderdecken

“Of all the things that man has made, none is so full of interest and charm, none possesses so distinct a life and character of its own, as a ship.”

Henry Van Dyke

“The art of the sailor is to leave nothing to chance.”

Annie Van De Wiele

“I don’t know who named them swells. There’s nothing swell about them. They should have named them awfuls.”

Hugo Vihlen

“Trawlermen have the heart of lions.”

Alan Villiers

“Then one day from the whited chart, and from the water, the land stands up. It was there. It has not only an existence as a dark outline on a chart; but it is a different land from that we left. It is the land to which we have been bound!”

Alan Villiers

Falmouth for Orders

“Only fools and passengers drink at sea.”

Alan Villiers

“No one is lonelier than a sailing ship captain.”

Alan Villiers

“There is little man has made that approaches anything in nature, but a sailing ship does. There is not much man has made that calls to all the best in him, but a sailing ship does.” Alan Villiers

“Love of the sea is a strange, unaccountable emotion.”

Charles Violet

“One night past some thirty thousand tons of ships went hurling at each other through the darkness. When they met, two thousand tons of ship and a hundred and seventy-six men lay at the bottom of the sea in a far off place.

Now comes the cruel business of accountability. Those who were there, those who are left from those who were there, must answer how it happened and whose was the error that made it happen.

It is a cruel business because it was no wish of destruction that killed this ship and its hundred and seventy-six men; the accountability lies with good men who erred in judgment under stress so great that it is almost its own excuse. Cruel because no matter how deep the probe, it cannot change the dead, because it cannot probe deeper than remorse.

And it seems more cruel still, because all around us in other places we see the pleas accepted that what is done is done beyond discussion, and that for good men in their human errors there should be afterward no accountability.

We are told it is all to no avail to revise so late the courses that led to the crash of Pearl Harbor; to debate the courses set at Yalta and Potsdam; to inquire how it is that one war won leaves us only with wreckage, and with two worlds still hurtling at each other through the darkness. To inquire into these things now, we are reminded, will not change the dead at Scholfield Barracks or on Heartbreak Ridge, no will it change the dying that will come from the wrong courses.

We are told too how slanderous it is to probe into the doings of a captain now dead who cannot answer for himself, to hold him responsible for what he did when he was old and tired and when he did what he did under terrible stresses and from the best of intentions. How useless to debate the wrong courses of his successor, caught in a storm not of his own devising. How futile to talk of what is past when the pressing questions is how to keep from sinking.

Everywhere else we are told how inhuman it is to submit men to the ordeal of answering for themselves. To haul them before committees and badger them with questions as to where they were and what they were doing while the ship of state careened from one course to another.

This probing into the sea seems more merciless because almost everywhere else we have abandoned accountability. What is done is done and why torture men with asking them afterwards, why?

Whom do we hold answerable for the sufferance of dishonesty in government, for the reckless waste of public monies, for the incompetence that wrecks the currency, for the blunders that killed and still kill many times a hundred and seventy-six men in Korea? We can bring to bar the dishonest men, yes. But we are told men should no longer be held accountable for what they do as well as for what they intend. To err is not only human; it absolves responsibility.

Everywhere, that is, except on the sea. On the sea there is a tradition older even the traditions of the country itself and wiser in its age than this new custom. **It is the tradition that with responsibility goes authority and with them both goes accountability.**

This accountability is not for the intentions but for the deed. The Captain of a ship, like the captain of a state, is given honor and privileges and trust beyond other men. But let him set the wrong course, let him touch ground, let him bring disaster to his ship or to his men, and he must answer for what he has done. No matter what, he cannot escape.

No one knows yet what happened on the sea after that crash in the night. But nine men left the bridge of the sinking ship and went into the darkness. Eight men came back to tell what happened there. The ninth, whatever happened, will not answer now because he has already answered for his accountability.

It is cruel, this accountability of good and well intentioned men. But the choice is that or an end to responsibility and finally, as the cruel sea has taught, an end to the confidence and trust in the men who lead, for **men will not long trust leaders who feel themselves beyond accountability for what they do.**

And when men lose confidence and trust in those who lead, order disintegrates into chaos and purposeful ships into uncontrollable derelicts.

The enormous burden of this responsibility and accountability for the lives and careers of other men and often, the outcome of great issues, is the genesis of the liberty which distinguishes the orders to officers commanding ships of the United States Navy.

"On The Collision of Wasp And Hobson"
The Wall Street Journal - Editorial 14 May 1952

[26 April 1952 collision between Aircraft Carrier Wasp and Minesweeper Hobson which was cut in two and sank.

176 were killed, with 61 injured survivors.]

“The wood ain’t growing yet that’ll beat *Bluenose*.”

Capt. Angus Walters

“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change;
the realist adjusts the sails.”

William Arthur Ward

“The breeze that carries you away from the sweltering city with its din and commotion both cools the brow and clears the mind. No clamoring telephones . . . no appointments to keep, save your anchorage by sundown, and you are on your way with a freshening breeze and lifted sheet.”

W.E. Warrington

“We picture the sailor’s life in terms of adventure and romance. We think of the sailor as someone who has seen life widely; but in point of fact there is no class of person who is less familiar with what is held ordinarily to constitute life. In consequence, he retains that freshness, almost amounting to an innocence of outlook, that is his particular and peculiar charm.”

Alex Waugh

“I never found naval men at a loss. Tell them to do anything that is not impossible and depend upon it, they will do it.”

Duke of Wellington

“Even now; with a thousand little voyages notched in my belt, I still feel a memorial chill on casting off, as the gulls jeer and the empty mainsail claps.”

E.B. White

“I cannot not sail.”

E.B. White

“If a man must be obsessed by something, I suppose a boat is a good as anything, perhaps a bit better than most.”

E.B. White.

“O Captain! My Captain ! Our fearful trip is done, the ship has weathered every rock, the prize we sought is won, the port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting.”

Walt Whitman

“When, staunchly entering port, after long ventures, hauling up, worn an old, batter’d by sea and wind, torn by many a fight, with the original sails all gone, replaced or mended, I only saw, at last, the beauty of the ship . . .”

Walt Whitman

“The Sea’s a Rumbistcal Place.”

Bill Wigg

“Against the faintest silver of the southeastern sky an Andean ridge of black water was marching hugely in the dawn. It was one of the big seas that travel alone: a rogue elephant of the ocean. Its massive head was swaying and tossing with a leisurely deliberation that spoke imperiously to some primitive center in us. And *Wyllo* was already soaring up its black precipitous face.”

Frank Wightman

“My experience with engines is that if you depend on them they fail you, but if it just doesn’t matter, they serve you.”

Frank Wightman

“Our ship drives east and another drives west with the selfsame winds that blow.

‘Tis the set of sails and not the gales which tells us the way to go.”

Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850 - 1919)

Winds of Fates

“(a submarine is) underhanded, damned un-English, and I suggest we treat all submarines as pirate ships in wartime and hang all the crew.”

Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson

Early 20th century

“The way of a boat skimming the water, how free she runs. She is free only when you have let her fall off again and have recovered once more her nice adjustment to the forces she must obey and cannot defy.”

Woodrow Wilson

“How calm! How still! The only sound the dripping of the oar suspended.”

William Wordsworth

“The charm of singlehanded cruising is not solitude, but independence.” Claud Worth

“It is as hard to describe the fascination of the sea as to explain the beauty of a woman, for, to each man, either it is self-evident, or no argument can help him see it.” Claud Worth 1926

Yacht Cruising, 3rd ed.

THE POLITICALLY INCORRECT PAGE

Boat Lovers: Personal Ads for Boaters

The Florida Mariner: Issue # 286 August 4, 1996

Ketch this! Beautifully crafted Tampa vessel, intelligently rigged, sleek, totally tanned hull, narrow beam, plenty of topsail, gourmet galley, light to moderate maintenance and very little weather helm. May be sailed by fit, trim, attractive, secure, non-smoking, light drinking 45 - 55ish captain with a great sense of humor and a dinghy that starts on the first pull!

Photo, phone please.

Write: Box 169

“There was a young girl called Bianca

Who slept while her ship lay at anchor;

She awoke with dismay

When she heard the mate say;

Hi! Hoist up the top Sheet and Spanker!”

Anonymous

(please note: sheet = line which controls the trim of a sail
spanker = lower fore and aft sail on the mizzen mast of a square rigged vessel)

“Shed a tear for the Wren named McGinnis

Who brought her career to a finis;

She did not understand

The sudden command

To break out the Admiral’s pinnace.”

Anonymous

(please note: wren = woman in the british navy during world war II
pinnace = admiral’s sailing boat of the 1700 & 1800's)

“A ship is always referred as “she” because it costs so much to keep her in paint and powder.”

Adm. Chester Nimitz
