

THE WARSHIP 'MARI'

1
The warship, which bore the name *Mari*, lay at anchor again, at moonrise, at a wharf in North China — secret and as white as rock salt.

I was the Captain, a lieutenant, slim and fair with the figure of a gazelle; I seemed to myself as graceful as a woman. I lay upon the morocco divan in the Captain's cabin, drowsing by day and by night, obsessed by opium and utterly abandoned. All this while a snow white collie at my feet kept watch over me. I had been unable — I do not know how long — to move at will. I was a prisoner.

2
The moonrise reminded me dimly of my sister — my only sister. I had an inkling of her fate. Long now she had been violated by the Chief Engineer of this ship, from Normandy. But I was powerless. Moreover the *Mari* was now a ship that shifted anchorage from port to port under cover of darkness — a ship of the fleet, under the command of infamous Yellow Pirates. Against my will I was slipping into an innocent sleep — a sleep that was not exactly sleep.

3
Midnight, I woke to the ominous creaking of the pulley. Once again someone was being consigned to the sea — I had a vision of the wooden coffin sinking down towards the dismal water. Sharper than the flash of steel, I suddenly visualized the body of my sister, now a corpse. I struggled to get to my feet, but the snow white collie, as cold as a button, was holding me down on the divan... Alas! Impotently I writhed my feeble body, and then fainted.

4
The moon had slithered down like an almond. Black night reined — time for the *Mari* to weigh anchor. The ship swung round on its ram, under cover of darkness, the color of the plague.

~FUYUE ANZAI



FRANK RUDOLPH PAUL

FLAGS For Wilfred Owen

The stars and stripes attached to every pane?
They celebrate brave men and women going
So none forget to fan the dying flames
And keep the crimson tide perpetually flowing

Film footage feeds parades across the sand
In barbed wire barracked training camps so we
Feel safe; those fresh creased uniforms can stand
The rigors of a war we hope we'll never see

Those uniforms distinguish theirs from ours
Once red and white cells seek quickest release
And bodies take the hue of Iris flowers
The prison of the skin, inviolable is breached

So bury them from thirty thou so we
Won't have to change but still can beat our breast
And hang 'em high from pipelines to the sea
The price is paid: a few flag draped homecoming chests

Still Owen's words keep calling from the trench
Cursed through the sludge of death's horrific march
Across the earth where countless wars have slaughtered countless men
And women, all for glory, we must ask:

Sweet? Fitting? To be killed for one's country?
Or kill: You sonabitch, bang bang you're dead!
When the fight's to line the pockets of the ruthless and moneyed
Through these white lies a deeper blue is read

~SID COOPER

**"There is something about poverty that smells like death.
Dead dreams dropping off the heart like leaves in a dry
season and rotting around the feet."**

~ZORA NEALE HURSTON

FIRE & MAGIC WATERS

Magic waters laughing with Mother Earth
There is fire in those little streams but who can see it
Little cherubs belching flames at pumice
They are catching runaway flamethrowers
When people get crazy with heavenly power
And start doing it to each other in war

When you grow up with death for a neighbor you toss it around some
When it gets thrown back you ask the lord for strength to overcome
Whose friend is heated sand... just ask the nomad shielded eyes
Desert and mountain cave and tent I shall hide from all
My brothers shall give me shelter and I shall be king

This poet is not king but scion of harmony
A wanna be angel of the blues, rock and folk guitar
I vibrate green and brown like the trees of Eden rock jungles
I am honorary sting of guile
All the while inside these tears are flowing
For unsafe children and woe begotten grownups with blackened souls.

~CHRISTOPHER KRAEMER

THE DAY WE CUT THE SKY OPEN

the day we cut the sky open
loud and proud, heads held high
didn't know what we had done.
first sight, first step
an alien soil
thought we knew our own friendly satellite
couldn't satisfy us there.
dipped our toe into the soup
the sea of disarray
of misplaced constellations,
developed a thirst for it,
a hunger
the taste of discovery
of first contact
neither God nor earth rewarded us for this
so we rewarded ourselves.
fashioned a trophy
of lives and prayers,
meaningless dates and statistics
sit back,
launch another mission
lost in the loops and threshes —
our pool of stars and planets
sip the success
from the golden cup of
Opportunity
awaiting the date,
when, we,
able to see the Little Dipper
from a different vantage point
shall receive a note of praise
"well done"
not restrained by the boundaries
of earth
and sky,
the comet caught, analyzed
once was what a hailed meeting —
every 2000 years —
reduced to bits of spatial flotsam and jetsam
trapped in aerogel
this cosmic object
hailed by our ancestors, worshipped —
we have stolen from time,
Us, thieves

OFF

staring into someone's window
it looks like no one's home
and no one's looking back at me
calling the dog to hear something love me
something breathe
sleeping in the darkened room
again and again
waking and lying
debating on the pills inside the dresser drawer
waiting for him to come home
and bring me what I've got to have
I want
I just need
something to distract me.

~SUSAN DeBOIS

the opaque veil of mystery, lifted
we have drunk from the cup
for too soon —
poisoning, infatuating ourselves
so madly in love with our quest for
domination
have gained knowledge, power, strength
not pausing
realization pushed away by cold, damp fingers
in our missions, our endless realms of charts
and data
have broken our one motivation
the unknown, known
Man looked at the stars
from the day he crawled —
gilled—
from the primordial soup,
and wondered through years
through eons of time, and history
wandering
our search ever onward
pressed by greed, and want,
and primeval instinct
to tire and cease,
Footprints worn away
no wind to dust them from sight —
only lost by mind,
An abandoned planet, our home world...
empty houses,
temple ruins,
ghost-eye vacant windows —
lost and alone,
adrift the same sea, now, ocean of stars
that we call our home.

~MARGIT BOWLER

Margit Bowler is 12 years old. She wrote this poem after reading an article in National Geographic about scientists' plans to capture part of a comet in the near future. (October 5 is the 45th anniversary of the launch by the Soviet Union of Sputnik, the first earth satellite.)

'JUST' CHILDREN

It was just children playing in the sand
(accompanied by the narcotic scent
of blooming lindens, don't forget),
just children, but after all
the devil, and the minor gods,
and even forgotten politicians,
who'd broken all their promises,
were also there and watched them
with unending rapture.
Who wouldn't want to be a child —
for the last time!

~ADAM ZAGAJEWSKI