

SAILING TO THE HAPPY ISLES

On the Decennial of His Enlistment in the Navy

One might have thought, the skids well juiced,
the soft-drink bottle broken on the bow,
such a jury-rigged vessel would go down
ch-gunk at its berth as soon as it got loose
from the supporting and restraining ways.
A real abortion: no place for the crew,
iron to the water, balsam below, boosted
by paddle wheels, propellers, oars and sails.
Yet there it wallows by, seagoing farce:
the S. S. Brady ten years out of port,
bound for the baths of all the western stars.
On the canted bridge the captain blots a chart,
curses his sextant and lays another course
to calm his paddling, screwing, rowing, tacking heart.