
SEA FEVER

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 grey dawn breaking.
 I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
 Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
 And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
 And the flung spray and blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.
 I must go down to the sea again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
 To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
 And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
 And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

John Masefield

From *Sea Water Ballads* (1902), copyright © Grant Richards, London

THINKING BACK TO GRADE SCHOOL AND RHYME

Recently my wife and I were discussing Doris Kearns Goodwin's book *Leadership in Turbulent Times* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 2018). We were arguing about a few things in the chapter about Lincoln and his "team of rivals." Irritated by something I said, she spontaneously burst out with the opening lines of Whitman's dirge "O Captain! My Captain" (O Captain! my Captain! Our fearful trip is done) and then proceeded to recite the entire poem verbatim. She learned those lines in grade school when teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic was a different sort of adventure with no iPods, iPhones, PowerPoint, or computers, and libraries still had lots of books on their shelves. All that I could serve up in response were a few of the Masefield lines from "Sea Fever," also learned in grade school. I don't remember too much about those days, but I do recall being sparked to a journey of reading a lot (well, all that was available at the time) of Dr. Seuss. Thinking a bit deeper, I remembered many more lines of poetry—virtually all from Seuss. I think that Seuss, next to William Carlos Williams (MD), might be my favorite poet. I bet he ranks up there on lists you may have. So the only other poems I can still recite lines from turn out to be from

Seuss-isms! A Guide to Life for Those Just Starting Out... and Those Already on Their Way (Random House, New York, 1999) and *You're Only Old Once...a Book for Obsolete Children* (Random House, New York, 1990). The latter is a hilarious romp through the "Golden Years Clinic on Century Square for Spleen Readjustment and Muffler Repair." And so it was that early exposure to rhyme led me to a love of poetry and literature; I bet that most reading this had a similar experience. It might not have been fun at the time, but I bet many can dig deep and come up with a few lines deep in memory and blurt them out right now—go ahead and try. No matter how your day has been, it will make you smile. I also bet a few of you will begin with "I must go down to the sea again..." and "O Captain! My Captain...."

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