

# *Yggdrasil*

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**By**

**Jack R. Wesdorp**

# Introduction

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### Prologue

Our gated community  
had all the amenities:  
miles of pristine island shore,  
bistro, market stalls and stores,  
park where kids can feed the deer,  
fiddle bars with belgian beer  
slinked by angels wearing less  
than you would think impressive.

Even heavenly gets old.  
Enough benevolent gold,  
do me artificial steel,  
true wishes that I can feel  
to gaze upon what I prize,  
to taste and recognize the  
galling status of my birth.  
That's damn why we fall to earth.

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# *Goonarr Stuurelaar*

## **Old and Again**

Goonarr never knew  
who his father was,  
but he's voodoo with  
what a whore-son does:  
leave home early on,  
ignore other kids  
noblemen and pawns,  
keep his birthplace hid,  
robe himself in dreams,  
aspire to boots,  
raft his way down stream  
to a pile of loot,  
Fafner's dragon hoard,  
look, a fishing boat,  
stow away on board,  
steal a captain's coat,  
more so, learn to speak  
words they can't ignore,  
better, don't be meek  
at a warded door,  
bash that bastard in,  
take your purse and prize,  
do to other men  
for your mother's eyes,  
never god look back  
on the curse you've cast,  
and you will not lack  
hard behind a mast.

## Peregrine

From Krónenborg to Texel,  
then a little stone called Urk,  
below decks through holes in hell  
taking any kind of work,  
overland to Hilversum  
hauling on a billy cart  
like any blond unskilled bum,  
where he filches harbor charts.  
So. Now he knows whence he's come  
towing barges heaving bales,  
twice up the Rhine to Cologne  
looking for the drachenfels,  
down to the isle of Tholen  
where he learns to sail in style  
west against the channel breeze,  
smuggles rum and guns with guile,  
makes Amsterdam at his ease,  
spends a moon in jail for theft  
which doesn't make him sheepish,  
just more audacious and deft,  
robbers eat while beggars weep.  
Whore houses a specialty,  
*that* he thinks a moral task,  
farmers' fields are fresh and free,  
look, a little whiskey cask,  
ain't no starving on these beans.  
Churches?---pushover monkeys,  
four carved confessional screens,  
more ecclesiastic junk,  
half a baroque pipe organ  
stored in the rector's attic,  
robbery is boring work  
when you're hex with rat hole tricks.  
Sometimes Goonarr Peregrine,  
mostly Goon the albatross,  
no one knows just where he's been  
and no one asks at his doss.  
Goon'd turned seventeen years old  
when he gets a lucky break,  
he'd been fucking with Isolde,  
daughter of dutch van der Beek.  
Their family's right well placed,  
holds him in much high regard,  
sends him to a naval base  
endowed and prized as their ward.  
School is really good to Goon,

he graduates hail cum laude,  
tells her they'll be married soon,  
promptly shuns that haughty crowd,  
signs with klompen privateers  
who're boon glad to have him on.  
Midshipman Goon with his peers,  
navigator and long gone  
off to hound the silver fleet,  
take a tall ship of his own  
eating powder cannon heat,  
sometimes flying skull and bones  
woe to ships both foe or friend,  
where there ain't no law but loot,  
maybe hanging at the end,  
and firbolg sirens flute on  
foggy fangtooth bone-yard banks,  
mooncussers in lonely coves,  
seven weeks among the Manx  
forging swords in Druid groves,  
roving north to vigil stones,  
Orkney where the plankstaene broods  
hunting Beowulf and bones,  
stocking up with ancient roods  
on a rock named Swona Braeme,  
salvaging old Viking hulls  
by a cavern flicker flame,  
eating turtle eggs and gulls,  
stacking slabs, master shipwright  
on that barren hermit perch,  
hard of grip, far-wither sight,  
war-chief In their scathach church  
until the moment's *Right Now!*  
Then by night to Rijkjavik  
in a growling dragon prow  
where he'll damn well take his pick  
of rugged men quick to quest;  
one cold morning on the coast  
witness futhark crowns a crest  
graven there by Ogham ghosts,  
to swear an oath sealed in blood  
for so long as fortune calls  
delight taken at the flood.  
Then, an easy southern haul  
in two sloops to Provincetown,  
a pleasant bustling haven...  
that's where Goonarr goes to ground,  
it blows just depraved enough.

## Polly and Orgel

We seen these two sloops coom in  
ghosting through thick fog.

“They’re droommin on a bodhran,”  
says me Pollywog.

“That’s a hoop of hoom’n skin  
they beats at high feast.”

She’s from Gort an’ all her kin  
oirish as a priest.

Antiphonal bands they were,  
each boat with its own,  
skirlin pipes they had a pair,  
maybe hekelphones,  
fiddle jiggers, castanyets,  
an accordion,  
tin whistles, four mandolets,  
an’ some alpen horn.

They pipes themselves to a berth,  
hauls the hawsers taut,  
loike they was the Eye on earth  
an’ god said they maught.

“Eerie lot, ain’t they, Orgie?  
How comes’t they can see?”

“Oi seen this In Krónenborg,  
Voikin’ scoparee...”

Maybe they jost listens good,  
birds in the choir;  
or maybe they’s in cahoots  
with wind an’ fire.

So we hoy back to the church  
to tell Poontang Jig,  
he invoites commander wurtch  
to park in the Pig.

Which is how it came to be  
his business prospered,  
we’s e to get our beer for free  
*and* our board’n doss.

## Isolde

I know it was idiot,  
god it went so good.  
I felt like a giddy slut  
with that prentice hood.  
"He'll leave you In a clocktick,"  
my seneschal said,  
"let me cut that cockalique  
from your kenning head."  
But I wouldn't hear of it  
did I love him so,  
am I such a hypocrite  
with the status quo?  
There's no going withershins  
against what's been done,  
now I'm wedded, father grins,  
to the king's own son.  
He's not all that good in bed  
but I'm set for life,  
put on show and overfed  
as a royal wife.  
Wailing ashes dust to dust  
dear god hear my plea,  
In his wayward wanderlust  
he'll remember me.

## The Tontine

A handful gathered round Goon,  
sware witness by orloch rune:  
Fergal beyond any law,  
Red Osmaul, later called Claw,  
Byrnie in his coat of mail  
with armorer Brodgar Bale,  
and Caerstaene the ogre witch;  
all of them bound to riches.

Mak Fergal given to rye  
thought to see his captain die,  
Byrnie took an arrow shaft  
through his eyeball on a raft,  
Caerstaene's eaten by a bear  
when he tried to loot its lair,  
Brodgar went back to a stone,  
he's buried lost and lonely.

Claw lives ashore unaware  
of how his boon brothers fare,  
Goon went down off Okracoke  
when the wind dealt him a stroke.  
There *is* one not party to  
oathbound in that fallen crew  
who inherits their tontine.  
He is called Okarina.

## Caerstaene

Oi allus feed bear  
me own bloomin sons,  
especial brown hair  
more hoomin-loike ones.  
Groats an' molasses,  
bocca by the tun,  
none of 'm dasses  
to maul me or run.  
Sometimes oi brings'r  
to dance an' have fun,  
they gets dar dinner  
when ours is all done.  
Juniper whispered,  
oi listens to *hers*,  
they'd bring more bizness  
if oi fed'm first.  
Dunno about dut,  
the bucket round here's  
a swift uppercut  
sells muckle more beer.

## **The Mermaid's Tail**

We were in the Horny Mermaid  
because our Squealing Pig was closed.  
Jig Poontang juggled with his blade  
and damn near cut off Byrnie's nose.  
They were breaking in a greek wench  
which is always fascinating,  
had her bent on a basket bench  
that creaked like demented grating.  
She seemed to take it well enough  
which don't say much for where she's from,  
then the amusement crackled rough  
and she went back to serving rum.  
Caerstaene brought on a dancing bear,  
the beast was obviously pissed,  
he had to bash it with a chair  
when it damn near robbed off his fist.  
Ham hooked out with the mermaid sign  
and that god dammit ain't allowed,  
he got the cat for that full nine  
before an avid rootin crowd.  
We revere that fine piece of tail,  
there ain't too much else that comes close,  
except maybe young Penny Bale  
and Jennie of the Compass Rose.  
We got the mermaid back of course,  
Ham had her stuck in his pallet,  
smiling ringlet curls none the worse  
for being fucked with his mallet.  
Aye me darlings, that's how she fares  
in the creaming foam of drunken  
sailors who smell stars in her hair.  
God help them share dreams in their bunks.

## The Bird

Binkel bought a cockatoo;  
goody gumdrop said the cat.  
So he gave the bird to Pru  
who could tell the cat to scat  
from his private cabin door.  
Sailors being what they are,  
if they ain't whoring ashore  
or busting up bayside bars,  
lead pretty prosaic lives  
sometimes bored to tiddlywinks  
when they play with dice and knives,  
or in Pruitt's case, "hey Binks!  
Let's teach the bird how to curse  
In fluent Den Helder dutch."  
*Keep y'r pecker in y'r purse*  
Goon thought an elegant touch.  
Being of devious mind  
he paid handsome for the bird  
and sent it dearly unsigned  
to his lordship Karl the third,  
baronet of Bussumwolde,  
current husband of Isolde.

## Pirate Song

We signed on with captain Goon  
because we's heard he's crazy,  
brigadier an' opportune,  
who lets 'is men get hazy.  
Halfway to hell an' back, lads,  
halfway to hell'n again,  
when he's starkers raving mad  
with puerto rican women.  
A chestful of gold an' pearls,  
the finest provender fare,  
newsome naughty buxom gurrls  
in nothin but curly hair.  
Goon astride 'is wheelhouse bench  
when the moonlight shimmers pale,  
with 's wench of the moment  
against a withering gale.  
In a far island lagoon,  
fat with plundered spoil an' spice,  
oot with captain Goon, m' dear,  
see you, oi, maybe next year.

## Port Royale

She's a wallowing tub  
by the time we make port.  
We occupy a pub,  
Goon walks up to the fort.  
it must be going sweet,  
he comes down in a coach  
with hizzonner the heat  
decked out in swash and brooch.  
"Here they be, all fine lads..."  
Swash eyes our battery,  
much brouha and egads  
"...m'lord?"---and such flattery.  
The upshot of which is  
we get a fine refit,  
Goon's mottled in stitches,  
"his pile just so's we git."  
Mizzen and a spare jib,  
a set of forespit sheets,  
seven barrels of bib  
and gore bloody rare meat.  
Enough to get us home  
with a hold of gold pig.  
We spent ours on women,  
captain Goon bought a brig.

## John Carver's Tale

Goon wanted a figure head,  
"gorgeous naked flooze," he said,  
"enough to make me crew cream  
in their skivvies when they dream."  
I told him fifty sterling  
which set his whiskers curling  
but he plunked it down in gold,  
he's got it to burn I'm told,  
and he brought the hemlock block  
that he'd sitting on the dock.  
Jennie Olsen sat for it,  
chiseled slow down to her slit.  
Michelangelo'd be proud  
to do a one so endowed,  
Goonarr even paid her fee  
when he saw her pose for me,  
which goes to show what it's worth  
when the thing's unique on earth.  
She's mounted *above* the bow  
with her legs splayed round the prow,  
scandalous in all the rags  
great pander for scallywags,  
worth big doubloons on her keel,  
that Goon's one canny dealer;  
they baptized her The Harlot.  
I wonder how far she'll get...  
ps:  
Hawaii for her maiden trip,  
I hear she's a happy ship.

## Chanties

Off into the fog  
for what ain't been found,  
don't you slip a cog,  
turn that capstan round, cobs,  
turn that capstan round.

Ham's in the crow's nest  
wearing Bungie's coat,  
borrowed clothes are best,  
all's roicht on this boat, boys,  
all's roicht on this boat.

Hackett hands out drugs,  
Fergie swabs the deck,  
we ain't eating bugs  
an' we ain't been wreck'd, gor,  
an' we ain't been wreck'd.

Serpents up ahead,  
monster atcher aft,  
evening's burning red,  
hope the cap ain't daft, sorr,  
hope the cap ain't daft.

Fresh beer in the vat,  
an' the bread ain't spurrd,  
nothing's the matter,  
all's roicht with the wurrd, lads,  
all's roicht with the wurrd.

## Molokai

It was a Great! cruise to the other side,  
pretty native flooze and nobody died,  
ample room on deck with competent men,  
just one minor wreck...I'd do it again.  
Off to a fast start racing round the cape,  
Harlot cut her wake in bodacious shape.  
She made Port au Prince in a record week,  
where we traded quince for two tons of teak,  
then to New Orleans to offload the logs,  
took on bore machines and brass windmill cogs;  
after that we fled cross the Carribeen,  
ragged clouds burn red, ships turn brigantine,  
it's every captain flies a doubtful flag  
and crap happens enough to make you gag.  
Caracas was filled with rebellious mobs,  
Goon sold a drill press to a welding shop  
on Saint Maarten's rock, for which they paid gold  
in a gilded crock, ha! So then he sold  
them the windmill gears for orange liqueur,  
sixteen kegs of rum, and a bless you sir.  
Done with the dealing, off to Bueños Aires,  
heeling hard past spanish main pirate lairs,  
"take a good look, lads, keep yer spy glass buffed,  
I will brook no slack, they fly bastard stuff,"  
his exact orders past a mug of rum,  
it's bugger aboard, we know Goon ain't dumb,  
beating round the horn he locks up our grog,  
mid-summer sleet and superstitious fog,  
crag by wan moonlight, dorsal fins that sing,  
banshee wailing hags, maybe sightless wings  
to swoop you off deck, we kept silent watch  
looped with rope and pulled our belts in a notch.  
We're coated with rime, everything crackles,  
a slow pantomime, lustrous tingling black  
on the breast of night and we're sore afraid.  
Shackled courage; heart of stone; feet of clay.  
So it must have been when Piri Riis dragged  
bustle-hearted men round that final crag.  
Then the current shifts, the waves get longer,  
Pacific driftwrack! Och, we feel stronger,  
we hunger for port, any sodden place,  
it's north by north west oh god by your grace.  
That's Valparaiso, worst pest hole on earth,  
her whores are black tressed and dead before birth,  
worth a sailor's salt to tell of back home  
before hearth-stone fire over tankard foam.

Goon was nothing loath, shore leave in his eyes,  
“you’ve got a week or forfeit paradise,  
be aboard, I ain’t coming after ye.”  
There was laughter, there were numb skulls and pain,  
Hackett supplied poppy wine and wolfsbane,  
I went to slop out Buckley from the gaol  
full of luckless assholes to make you quail  
at the thought of being god damn human,  
bought him breakfast, then bought him a woman  
who swore to get him in sufficient shape,  
b’god an honest whore inured to rape  
with the right bonny stuff to get it done,  
Goon sent her enough to buy off ten nuns,  
and then. then he counted heads, “amoizing,  
they’re all here, no one’s dead, the gods be proised,”  
he hauled up anchor by himself and set  
a fores’l just to get us out and wet,  
I woke up some damn next day afternoon  
retching clammy muck in a clay spittoon.  
All in all a successful port of call,  
got away assfree still blessed with my balls.  
Goon took the helm, skirting Galapagos,  
calm. alert, steering mostly by his nose,  
sidestepping that long dead end inland sea  
giving Harlot her head, spinning her free,  
pretty cleft dipped in spume, among grey whales  
who’ve long come there to court, crowding on sail,  
running north past Catalina flying  
all that she’s worth, looking keen and vying  
for the best dock in old Francisco bay,  
bold for business chocked to a granite quay,  
and how the bankers did queue to quibble;  
most frankly gobble, a few but nibble.  
Goon sold off all the rum in good measure,  
funneled the Curaçao at his leisure,  
I never saw so much money change hands  
or how the claw of government demands,  
he kept us close en garde on six bell shifts,  
“keep a hard nose, lads, don’t accept no gifts!”  
When we went ashore to buy trading wares  
we’re armed to the eyeballs, parade in pairs,  
yes sir, no sir, *that’s* what our captain needs,  
we’re in a hurry, sir, show us your beads,  
carpenters’ tools, fish hooks, ten kegs of nails,  
crockery, cutlery, cooking pots, pails,  
cotton bolts, all those needles and thread,  
we’re done---roll the lot in a hundred nets,  
send it to Harlot and see her first mate.

We'll do that again, gadz, bargains feel great!  
Frisco was good to us, welll, for a moon,  
but a risky place, I bought a harpoon,  
better than a sword, over-awing brass,  
none doubted my word or messed with my ass.  
I displayed it In a dive called the Brig,  
a terrible way to slay a live pig...  
Bosun resigned, I can cook and talley  
so I got promoted to the galley  
which is a safer job than top'sl hand;  
you eat better and forage outland shops.  
It took July to get our cargo stowed,  
it was a high Bristol waterline load  
any admiral would be satisfied.  
I topped the larder and then...there's the tide.  
"Due west, Peels, tack her south against the grain,  
keep her heeled three degrees but not astrain."  
Huge Pacific swells eleven days out,  
the watch on four bells heavy in the snout,  
"roll those nail kegs aft, coil 'em down on top,"  
just a normal gale spoiling into slop.  
Two weeks out Harlot started tacking wide  
across the chart to where those black rocks hide.  
We smelled it first; Angelo said, "brimstone."  
He was nursed on the rim of Stromboli  
so he ought to know. Then we saw the plume  
blowing our way like an upside down broom  
sweeping purple clouds, god's hand majestic.  
I sat in the shrouds confessing to Nick,  
patron saint of sailors, children, and thieves,  
that no matter what I'd always believe  
in the fortune of ships and innocence.  
Such vows ripple through the dance of kinship  
unto the far reach beyond horizons.  
The first beach sparkles nigh with morning sun,  
satin crescent flux pouring into noon,  
steep cliffs, untested reefs, alluring moon.  
"We need a lucky lagoon, keep 'em peeled,  
stand well offshore, don't want no mucked up keel."  
Goon waxed cautious without trustworthy charts,  
"raw volcanic grief crops up round these parts,  
take her deepside the west end of that nose."  
There the waves broke steep, cresting in wide rows,  
slamming down on coral with monster strides.  
In a dory it'd be one *bonny* ride!  
We waited on the tide to send in skiffs  
to sound a strait between defending cliffs.  
"Lots of plumb in the pass, harbor looks mint,

keep the wind atcher ass!" Rum jubilant  
is what it is, paradise with bells on,  
priceless fair water...no one stirs till dawn.  
Genesis describes morning when she's born  
kissed by divinity, rose without thorn.  
Sunrise vapor over virgin jungle;  
the soul of birds unveiled forever young;  
crown of spider froth wrapped round streaming words;  
green glider striking at a moth; oh lord.  
We are awestruck in brilliant glimmering,  
children before god. Then we go swimming.  
Cavorting. Marble cake, chinese lanterns,  
courtly harmony, treasonous chanties.  
I broke out a keg of excellent ale;  
aquanaut bunting festooned off the rail.  
Unspeakable black eyes measure our worth;  
it takes a week before they venture forth.  
Goon admonishes, "treat these people right,  
we'll go meet ashore when we're invited."  
First to foray is a single princess,  
curious fey winsome in her tress.  
"Hang onto your cock, Haight, give her a smile,  
tie some beads in her locks and wait a while."  
Oh yesss, sure enough, ten more with their men  
every morning trading stuff and again.  
The rules get relaxed, young women's aboard,  
Hack lost some tools, hoy, we locked up our swords.  
Eventually the word leaks out upstream  
to a war canoe heavy in the beam,  
thirty paddles flash per side, gorgeous teak,  
big bad ass in the back, sports a gold beak,  
Goon dons his brocade admiralty spiff,  
loads a box, and we pipe him to a skiff.  
"Gimme your harpoon and roll the cannon,  
now we'll see who's the older cunning man."  
Does a captain row his own boat?---no less.  
Is the canary coat impressed?---oh yes.  
Goon displays the contents of the coffer;  
big bird delays, considers the offer;  
oh hell, he wants the harpoon---Goon says No;  
we'll have that yellow buzzard eat some crow.  
"Hey, Howitzer! Blow the tip off that palm."  
He points; Howie rips with a fire bomb.  
Consternation in the ranks, that won't do;  
let's be cordial, thanks for the donation,  
pig roast on the beach, bring the brag about,  
get me outta reach of that dragon snout.  
It's over lunch I ask, "what's In the box?"

He winks, "buncha basket trash, glutzy rocks,  
and one blinker to grab his avarice:  
a kinky fabulous bengali kriss."  
We hang at anchor for three moons at least,  
half to mind the bank, half to fuck and feast,  
not a bad wise to spend your livelihood  
amassing prize pearls where the diving's good.  
Hackett found a poisonous toad (chortle),  
ground nuts, ironwode, edible wortle,  
excellent stands of mahogany burl,  
spectacular...oh, and I found my girl.  
Most of the crew was in the same pickle,  
whoever knew that fucking is fickle.  
Goon lectured over my best cake and beer:  
"You can't take her back and she can't live here,  
the native men will consider her crud.  
The mating dance in a tribe is new blood  
but the more you fuck the deader she'll get,  
it's a horrible fate In a bucket.  
Aaand...exotic women lead lonely lives  
exiled back home with the blue nose wives;  
they'll play at clever snit sideways pretend  
but they'll never admit your bride as friend;  
far better to spin among single girls  
and barter sewing pins for pretty pearls."  
Son of a bitch. But we knew he was right,  
much ado at the witching hour that night.  
Many swore they'd jump ship and disappear,  
I set to brewing more persuasive beer.  
There was talk of mutiny and murder;  
Goon went rooting in some beauty called "bird"  
which made her a daughter of Yellow Beak,  
trading got better; that bought him a week.  
He sent a squad to gather gum and cork,  
divide and conquer definitely works.  
That's when we discovered seven idols  
set in a cove above heavy high tides.  
You know what museums pay for that stuff?  
Then it's hey big beezer bird's in a huff,  
seems we desecrated his holiness  
just by our presence (we're lowly cusses),  
a lot of brouharhea drumming beat,  
gotta go meet bumblebee parakeet,  
he hitches up his jolly ample hide  
the upshot of which is he's mollified,  
apparently statues *like* to take trips  
and we've got a big enough battle ship,  
they'll maybe trade one for our figure head;

frigate hell you say, we'd rather be dead,  
negotiations proceed at three knots,  
we throw in the last of the pails and pots,  
thus it comes to pass that Jennie Olsen  
graces a bastion in all her fulsome  
erotic glory before the abyss,  
carved color amid muted lava schist  
surrounded by inscrutable faces  
in one of the world's great magick places.  
Goon said, "we have the original home,  
good friends exchange gods, let's call it a loan,"  
and that sufficed. We hope she's satisfied.  
One curious bit about bartered brides  
and graven gods when they trade their station,  
which may explain divine motivation,  
we were after all eager to go back,  
take that stone man long leagues, risk woe and wrack  
for no apparent reason except him,  
lost interest in polynesian women,  
and that's plain eerie for us horny gobs.  
There was wailing in the wood, forlorn sobs,  
I suspect Goon and his bird cut a deal,  
something hex, but who's to say what is real  
in the wanderlust of sorcerous ken.  
All I know is we won't be here again  
except in our dreams; this will have to do.  
It now beseems me that I always knew  
such would come to be and I am content.  
Departure was by stealth, we fold our tents  
and slip into the moon as wealthy men,  
Goon bade, "take the ship far to sea and when  
you sight sail flee like slagged off gutless rats."  
When you're fat with swag you don't cut or chat.  
He kept tight gravel-eyed hands on the wheel,  
bandersnatch stepping deep under his keel,  
nor did we land anywhere to take rest,  
faring manyfold to our destiny.  
We weathered a typhoon, lost the main mast  
with the boom, a royal pain in the ass  
running on a spit and rake. In the hold  
I swear that little god's eyes glittered gold,  
"must like hurricanes," Higginson observed,  
"chain him to the stub, test his friggin nerve."  
Round the horn retrograde it's soup and slurt,  
rough enough to rip buttons off yer shirt,  
didn't see no ice bergs, didn't hear squat,  
bejeezus wind and we're on board with that.  
Goon took the mid Atlantic baileywick,

a gale tore off the cook shack rail right quick,  
behind *that* I fed 'm biscuit rations  
all across the stinking Saragasso.  
Hack took a poison toad mixed with gold grit,  
packed his mortar and stomped it into shit,  
set a dish before his nibs after dark,  
then went fishing and promptly gaffed a shark.  
“Let’s call him Mako, rub his whizz for luck  
before every squall,”---that’s the name that stuck.  
We ate better. Did the equator jig,  
thought about Heather in the Squealing Pig,  
fair Jennie naked back on Molokai,  
fabulous and friend alike in our eye,  
soul of woman goblet filled to the lip,  
Valparaiso brothels and gilded ships,  
those we left behind, many yet to be,  
frozen momentum of divinity.  
It took us ten moons, not a bad traverse  
for all the damage it could have gone worse.  
Goonarr played a last canny captain’s trick,  
he sailed us within sight of Rijkjavik,  
made one curious pass before a cape  
that caused the hair to stand up on my nape,  
hexen-schaft, didn’t ask don’t want to know,  
he shackled the little god back below,  
“from here it’s on my own recognizance...”  
roicht, we’re socked in with illogical fog  
dancing do si do round kraken icebergs,  
floating crap, he looks surprised at Fergal,  
Fergie only shrugs, “I dinna do it,  
ask the horlogier,” he points at Pruitt,  
Pru seems far at sea much maybe manic  
and chants dutch mumbles “iss de titanic”  
which we can’t decipher evil boding  
cross yourself with a knife gang plank loading  
time turns elastic don’t put boot on board  
faint hooting ghastly burns a silver cord  
snaps into the present lord what is *this*?  
Silence. Nothing. Less. God keeps what is his.  
We sail out of that fog bank in cold sweat  
baletire I feel its dank fingers yet.  
“...on my own recognizance all the way,”  
he stumbles, “home god dammit, Province quay,”  
fumble foot *don’t you want a family?*...  
bumble boot *shambling through tree bare branch* “,,,damn,,,”  
*yes you were are will be maybe nowhere*  
“do you hear that?” *Yesss, every sssea farer*  
*across the universe beholds to truth*

*each according to his personal sooth.*  
That we heard. And then Pruitt winds our clock  
back into itself, "let's get this tub docked,  
I've got a life ashore to finish off,  
wife to kiss, kids to bore in Engelhoff."  
Blasé watchman running on his own time  
cutting another notch on pantomime.  
We rather envy him for his gusto;  
we are ship-wedded men and Goon's to us.  
So it falls into place along the beach,  
around Race Point, into the bay a reach  
and then ghosting in past fisherman's bar,  
"I wish you'd tell no one how rich we are  
but that's probably asking way too much,"  
worried that we'll get robbed or deep in dutch,  
"ten men to moor the ship and discharge burl,  
about a month to money-change the pearl;  
those who want their swag right beezelblub now  
I'll hand you a bag; see me in the bow."  
I stayed on; some one's got to cook and pen,  
most of them are gone. I'm going again.

## Juniper

I told them I'd got a job  
at the apothecary  
with some rooms above the shop.  
I rented three, just barely,  
to keep up appearances  
and my life went merrily.  
Dearly beloved at dances,  
in reality a fine  
concubine in fancy dress.  
Then John Carver came to dine  
and he a sculptor of note  
who pitched a plan with red wine.  
"I'll screw your ass to a boat,"  
honest, that's just what he said,  
"famous...most prized whore afloat."  
*That* thin line ran round my head  
all the time we were fucking.  
Ten thousand men I'll not wed...  
But each of them hot to jack  
thinking of my cloth and cleft;  
that'd be magick great and black.  
John's as expert as he's deft  
and paid me a wicked sum  
in the way of whores and weft.  
Aye, every time a man comes  
I am his vigor for life.  
Visit me. I'll give you some.

## Hamish

All hail the fool in motley coat,  
a drooling sacerdotal goat,  
jigger bugger bells on his cap,  
lunatic juggle banter snap,  
fabulous table shell-game rook,  
pickpocket flash and I can cook  
better than any hash in hell;  
trickster; lettered. Goon pays me well.

## Jan Rolf

Captain Goonarr?---there's a man  
I'd not care to meet.  
Not in the Caribbean  
even with a fleet.  
A puertoguese might escape  
if he surrenders,  
even Den Helder slave ships  
would be befriended,  
but one of our own out there  
'd be bloody chum  
if caught flagrante unawares  
an' I ain't that dumb.  
Oh, In port he's right enough  
to sit over drink,  
and light handed with his stuff  
if you're short on clink.  
Just keep in mind how he "signs"  
the crew he covets,  
he plies 'm with wolfsbane wine;  
then he owns y'r stuff.  
We do the same to blackbirds,  
they stay pliable;  
that's what we want---healthy herds.  
Wanna buy a cull?

## Okarina

I first met him on the stairs  
of the Squealing Pig saloon,  
cockeyed hat and whiskey hair  
heeling to larboard, "I'm Goon,"  
says he pretty well unbunged,  
it being about three bells,  
"come'n mate, the night's shtill young  
less you'n me roust some hell,"  
to which I yam indebted  
not given to half hearted,  
me plat-dutchman's liver headed  
and *that's* how we got started.

It was high tide when I woke  
in a scupper salt with snot.  
"Pour some grog into this bloke  
and don't let'm slip his knot,"  
that'd be Satan's son my goon  
and I'm an idjut I thunk,  
someone buttoned me with boon  
and led me fore' to a bunk.  
Next I know it's mid high seas  
somewhere off the coast of ice,  
mending netting on my knees  
coughing blood and carving dice.

We lost half our crew that cruise,  
I got bumped to afterdeck,  
Goon told me, "you paid your dues,"  
and took the yoke off my neck,  
"equal share," says he, "but if  
we sink a spaniard freighter  
I'm buying a bigger skiff  
and you lot get yours later..."  
He leaves the carrot dangling,  
I'm weighing odds in my head,  
how our skein wanders tangling,  
"we're with you, sir, live or dead."

*So mote it be* witches vow,  
we toast his finest cognac,  
banshee froth beneath our bow  
on a south Atlantic toc.  
"All or nothing, that's the game.  
Okarina, toss your bones,  
is it sudden death or fame?"

I heard only pipers' drone  
withal conch shell fluting spell  
somewhere off the leeward rail  
which I took as boding well,  
and then, then we sighted sail.

Low and loaded to the line,  
probably with Inka gold,  
Goon just mutters, "firbolg fine,  
don't let that butthole get old."  
Battle is a single shoot  
through her wheelhouse canopy,  
a week to offload their loot  
and then the mangled debris  
a piece of burnt-off grating  
a man's arm a rudder fluke  
circling sharks hidden hating  
Goonarr whispered, "God?---don't look."

Heading north we broke a spar,  
the bilge filled, we slept on deck,  
Goon ran aground on a bar  
and there we careened the wreck.  
"What we need is pitch pine rope,  
scrape those barnacles and guns,  
then we caulk her boards (I hope)  
and listen...nobody runs."  
Off a'dory cross the shoals,  
god be damned we'll make it yet,  
hang a yard and plant new poles  
stay on guard, yeah, fill that net...

It takes him a friggin moon  
to row back a tub of gunk,  
and then suddenly there's Goon  
looking fit, tight in the hunk.  
"Heat this goop and boil the cord,"  
his hands are black with resin,  
"gimme grog and soak my sword,  
no mutiny I'm guessing."  
Then he staggers off to sleep,  
we pack the lap with oakum,  
Captain Goon, lord of the deep,  
and that, lads, ain't no hokum.

A week's work to bail her out,  
"roicht, let's try to float 'er off,"  
which is what I kinda doubt

with her keel stuck in a trough.  
“Drop the cannon overboard,  
shift ballast aft in the bilge,”  
so we lift that precious hoard  
and that’s the fruit of pillage.  
Loot’s heavy, it drags you down  
in ways you won’t understand,  
he who wears an iron crown  
stands perilous close at hand.

Goon beckons me, “getcher shell,  
call us up a Neptune’s gale,  
we’re going home straight through hell,”  
then he ropes us to a rail.  
*Okarina of the priests,  
ancient lineage of Pan,  
mage of sunlight, wind, and beasts,  
succour us now as you can.*  
So the olden preyr flies forth,  
seven toned Aeolian,  
and who dares doubt what it’s worth  
when the holy work is done.

Up, up from the leeward isles,  
seven monster tidal waves  
shove us off that bar for miles  
while the hurricane it raves.  
Through the Hispanola straits  
just a ragged foresheet flap,  
fifteen men meet with their fate  
and the bowsprit beat to crap.  
Long rollers off Cayman Gran,  
Goon sent four, “go fell an oak,”  
to contrive bogus cannon  
and fix the five spars that broke.

Thus it was that we made quay  
round the cape to Provincetown,  
thirteen moons we’ve been away  
“going fishing outward bound.”  
Home in sterling Bristol style  
pennants prosperous aloft,  
Captain Goon he cracks a smile,  
“aye me own lads,” he says soft.  
I overheard him weeping  
in his cabin bunk that night,  
“into Thy hands they’re keeping  
mayhap I might join them yet.”

Candlemass we all convene  
upstairs in the Squealing Pig,  
ruffled coats of velvet green,  
barristers in powdered wigs,  
rolled parchment on marble slabs,  
each to get his just due share,  
caviar and tender crabs,  
too much lust nor do I care  
for ostentatious pleasure.  
Bungie was already ruined  
before he got his measure,  
he'll be morbid by next June.

Hackett owns a plantation,  
Binkel bought a brewery,  
I see Haight on occasion,  
he runs a glue factory.  
Goonarr bought the queen's Gallante,  
a fine fitted caravel,  
none of us will ever want  
aboveboard we wished him well.  
I signed with him as first mate,  
three more trips and then some wreck,  
that's the portion on my plate  
when it's only me comes back.

### From Billy Binkel's Brew Booke

Beer for breakfast, ale with lunch.  
Queer beer just before the crunch,  
scoparius mixed in rum  
and piper methysticum;  
a flagon of berserker  
boost obliges men to work  
at what usually they shun,  
like hacking heads just for fun  
or gun-deck eating cordite;  
hops to hide that bitter bite,  
saaz is good or hallerthau;  
heavy stout for evening chow;  
hemp indica makes'm weep;  
rauwolfia helps'm sleep;  
if you want the wort to fizz  
add a pint of healthy piss,  
but don't dammit breathe a word  
unless you want your guts gored  
by a bunch of angry sots.  
An' for you french spalpeen snots  
I've got absinthe licorice  
brewed with bane and ambergris  
that's the angel's kiss of death.  
If you're short on jizz or breath  
I can fix your worst disease,  
pecker limp or cabin wheeze;  
since you're in the rut to ruin  
getcha finished pretty soon,  
stuff to give ye raving fits;  
that's our Goonarr's favorite.

## Claw Osmaul

It was brutal surgery,  
Fergal held him down,  
Hack was cursing fluently,  
Claw made not a sound.  
Three mugs of poppy head rum  
then he went slack jawed,  
the rest of us watched struck dumb  
by the axe and saw.  
Hack strapped it to a stanchion  
and burned his blades black.  
That's how Claw of the Red Branch  
made his moniker.  
He lay half dead for a week  
in Goon's own billet,  
sucking soup from a beaker  
through a brass fillet.  
When the poultice sock sloughed off  
he refused to look,  
he could only rasp real gruff,  
"make it five steel hooks."  
It's a man's self image that  
determines his worth,  
not lineage, no firm nor hat,  
not any of earth.  
Claw the Maul became a smith,  
rose to forge master,  
he could hammer better with  
that claw and faster.

## Urquhart Grant

I signed on with Goon in may  
when he took his boat to France,  
where the philharmonic plays  
and lewd ballerinas prance.  
I guess it was his intent  
to get his crew some culture  
among the landed gentry  
and silver button soldiers.  
To turn a profit I'm sure,  
fill his beez with chardonnay,  
but I think the main allure  
was to get his weezer laid.  
We hit Le Havre dockside  
about mid blister july,  
ye could getcher cockles fried  
on the bridle path'nby.  
Goon hired ten musketeers  
on guard while we're gone again,  
bought local sloop, gang, and beer  
to manage us up the Seine.  
Lads, this is fair dinkum true;  
belgian beer is *excellent*,  
where we are or blinkin who,  
by that time we're pretty bent.  
Paris was chic, posh, urbane,  
did I mention expensive?  
Lots of stacked up women vain,  
snotty men wax'd defensive.  
We drilled deep holes through our purse,  
I thought to practice my french,  
that was easy while immersed  
in fractured frog and wild wench.  
"Lesh procure a winery,"  
dunno who came up with that,  
but it seemed a fine idea  
while lounging on la Grande Jatte.  
We hied it south through Provence  
to sample her cellar wares,  
ribald mountain morris danse  
hoot mon at basque country fairs.  
My family's distillers  
back in Edinburgh to wit,  
that presumed to make me skilled  
In choosing medoc of merit.  
What it is we all got drunk  
and when the time came to pay

Goon plunked down a hefty chunk;  
then we set off to Marseilles.  
The logistics of transport:  
seven ox carts, sugar beets,  
dead bodies, one lawyers' tort,  
there's thank god the harbor street.  
Three of us sat on the kegs,  
the rest to retrieve our boat,  
hung down brung down fester dregs,  
beer is god's best antidote.  
Heave ho roll them barrels oot,  
get'm stowed bung up in racks,  
stick more belgian doon yer snoot,  
give a cheer for Fergal Mak!  
We went straight to Boston snobs  
with our bonafides up front,  
hear ye hear ye well heeled nob  
buy a caseload for your cunt.  
I pasted pretty labels  
but those bottles didn't sell  
to high fallutin tables;  
Bordeaux doesn't travel well.  
Goon sighed, "'twas a funsome cruise,  
we sure had a devil's bash,  
but I think henceforth no booze,  
better we'd deal bogus cash."  
But. There's a happy postlude.  
If you store wine for a year  
it loses that crude base nose  
and *then* you can sell it dear.

## Byrnie

A fortune teller told me  
I'd meet a bad end,  
something like a lightning bolt,  
maybe with a friend.  
She seemed confused by the spread,  
couldn't tell me why,  
except for sure I'd be dead  
clutching at my eye.  
Bale and me were always jack  
In the oathbound crew,  
swore we'd watch each other's back  
as blood brothers do.  
Sudden death don't make me blench,  
it's drowning I fears,  
helluva fix being french  
among valiant peers.  
Long ago I vowed to god  
I'd slay that terror;  
step over my dead body,  
I'll be standing there.  
Lightning stroke or gronking ghost,  
whatever the hell,  
no abandoning my post.  
Bale won't take it well.

## **Bale's Report**

Some scurve sent us out logging.  
Byrnie an' me went sloggin  
up a creek on Tortola  
looking for cocobola,  
a real fine furniture wood.

We found an excellent stand,  
hacked off a dozen by hand,  
hauled 'm back down to the creek,  
took about a wary week  
an' trussed 'm fair middlin' good.

So we're floating down to you  
past some god forsaken slew,  
he's wearin' his ringlet vest  
full breastplate an' all the rest  
as any vigilant should.

Somebody sneaky an' sly  
shot an arrow through his eye,  
Carib injuns I hate'm,  
an alligator ate'm,  
I'd have grabbed him if I could.

## **drums**

bearded slaver men  
devil come again  
mangle fenland floor  
jungle home no more  
sweat with horrid stink  
cannot smell we think  
we will shrink their head  
keep their wanga dead  
traitor better slave  
zambie without grave  
we call raven man  
he do what he can  
hide in mangrove tree  
shoot him where he see  
other tree-hate go  
so his master know  
carib obeah  
caapi banistrae

## Two Physiks

...I hear Hackett grows the best,  
tall ones as big as a moose  
from seed that he gets out west...  
...making valerian brews  
mixed with mandragora root  
and sanguinaria juice...  
...a lot can be said for loot,  
it bought Hack a nice estate  
but bashed Bungie in the snoot...  
...Goon brought back some copper plate  
good for etching folding green,  
if you want in go see Haight...  
...Hackett's got some castor beans  
and a bunch of toxic frogs,  
now we have the murder means...  
...I've tried it on Bradford's dogs,  
he thinks they died of witch craft,  
told him I'd protect his hogs...  
...I heard Brodgar's going daft,  
he wanders round soaked in stout  
maundering of devil rafts...  
...I'm not sure what that's about,  
Penny seems to take it well,  
keeps her pretty nice and taut...  
...hoy, and there's the dinner bell,  
I'm to be the Goonarr's guest,  
give 'm my regards in hell...

## **Penny Bale**

It's a living my mother said,  
Indeed the Rose is good to me,  
they gimme room and board and bed  
so the men can be rude with me.  
Mostly it's just local custom  
but sometimes booted swells tramp through,  
then we get to cut the mustard;  
the best patrons are Goonarr's crew  
because they shell out better pearls,  
great big gorgeous black and red ones,  
sterling whites to set off my curls,  
that will pay for their bastard sons.  
No one wants to marry sailors,  
they'll only bring you grief and doubt  
if they's dead; the worst are whalers,  
they stink so bad it won't wash out.  
I'm gonna catch a fisherman,  
somebody who brings back dinner  
without buckles risking cannons.  
Hey, he'd be a fucking winner.

## Waikiki

Once again around the horn,  
straight across to Waikiki,  
where the world wears her morning  
vrai with women and boutique.  
A pretty painless passage,  
the horlogiere was adroit,  
we can trust our beer and brass  
but our old haunt was destroyed.  
Evidently there's been war  
or perchance a tidal wave,  
no one to trade for cargo;  
there was naught, not even graves.  
Howard fired the cannon,  
only sighs returned his blast,  
we flew our flag on the strand,  
grievous pennants at the mast.  
Adieu sandy cove and crags,  
skirted Hale'iwa bay  
where surf rears up with dragon  
fury and gods come to play.  
Round parlous reefs, riptide straits,  
lava river thunder spume,  
cyclops eye, red veiled crater,  
ocean bride weds fire groom.  
Ahoy, there's another ship  
anchored in a pleasant sound,  
endless translucent ripple,  
captain Cook lies dead aground.  
Sometimes all your best intent  
put to forth still comes to naught,  
foe whom you once befriended,  
we dumped ashore what we'd brought.  
And we set a little god  
back into his bastion niche,  
some of us are beholden  
to vows. We retrieved our witch.  
She wore three garland roses,  
evident they'd held her well,  
but we're sure their image knows  
of his future eye on hell.  
Reptile missionary frocks,  
bureaucrats bloody handed,  
phthisis, leprosy, and pox,  
tall hotels, polluted sand.  
For him and his kith we mourn,  
for Mako and Juniper,

for our children yet unborn,  
for lovers' moonlit murder.  
Deep elemental forest;  
fair innocence of Eden;  
sparkling paradise is lost.  
Mayhap be it so again.

## **Mak Fergal**

she's a roicht noice rat hotel  
what deye calls a caravel  
yoosed to be de queen's own boat  
ain't no sweeter scow afloat  
deye puts me to scroobin brass  
blue bell-bottoms on me ass  
ooniforms en three four-square  
where we bound I dinna care  
always pays de stuff on time  
ain't suspoishus of me crime  
eight on eight off plimoth whores  
aye sir naye sir commodore  
cap'n dinna take na crap  
where he's been ain't on de map  
foist mate's got de hairy eye  
ain't na better berth den deye  
joost stick me X on dat dot  
gor I yam a licky sot

## Fundamental Facts

Who brews the best beer?

Aboard ship it's Ham.

Hack supplies the queer  
for maximum slam.

Who will you follow  
unto blazing hell  
or the king's gallows?

Okarina's shell.

Who's the boon to fuck?

Penny at the Rose,  
plus she'll bring you luck  
when the typhoon blows.

Who's got the finest  
dope in christendom?

Jig will brace your wine  
and blister the rum.

Where's the last bone-yard?

Where nets are mended,  
Nicholas on guard  
with Neptune's trident.

Are we your brothers  
faring on the deep?

In each others' care,  
only mothers weep.

If you come again  
we'll be with you glad  
odds to bodkin ken  
of the times we've had.

If your course be set  
with unearthly fish  
let your need be met  
exact as you wish.

## Wreck of the Gallante

My third trip with Stuuurelaar  
'sto a little no-name bay,  
a gap tooth cove, riptide bars  
where there ain't no firkin quay.  
Goon had sunk a warship there:  
cannon bores of naval brass,  
bogus cash, forgery wares,  
all told fifty tons of mass.  
First we heaved the ballast out,  
then exhumed a rotten keel;  
making port?---I had my doubts  
with such heavy wretched deal.  
Stuuurelaar was adamant,  
I pointed at our butt thwarts,  
how they'd splay apart in front  
and rupture from their garrets.  
But he did it anyhow,  
took two hard-ass hundred trips  
ferrying with flatboard scows  
before we had that hoard shipped.  
Then he waited for the moon  
to winkle encouragement,  
that's the way it was with Goon:  
arrogant, drunk, demented.  
I'm surprised it went as well  
up the Carolina coast;  
then the barometer fell,  
I lashed my fin to a post.  
So we're way down in the snout  
plowing furrows with her spit,  
in the bilge it's bashabout,  
I load a skiff with my kit.  
The Gallante heels hard aluff,  
I hear cannons rolling loose,  
overboard the copper stuff,  
it won't pay your bankrupt goose.  
Goonarr runs before the gale,  
I stand with him at the wheel,  
his last words are "mother...bail"  
a whore-son's final appeal.  
Way too little, way too late,  
ultimate falsehood founders,  
brass bores, dead men's heavy freight,  
bungled booty going down.  
Stalwart Gallante turns turtle,  
a top-heavy sloshing tomb,

I try a grab for Fergal  
but lose him in phosphor spume.  
Seven days a floating hulk,  
I salvage Hack's biscuit tins,  
I note a ruptured bulkhead  
and big skulking mako fins.  
I...hung there for a long time,  
found an errant rudder fluke  
encrusted with tar and slime,  
serpent venom, I puked blood.  
Then, then there's nothing but foam,  
I'm lashed to the steering oar,  
takes me five weeks to row home,  
I ain't going out no more.

## Over

"Aye, what be your name?"

"Goonarr Stuuurelaar  
of the Skara Braeme  
come to cross your bar."

"Welcome captain Goon,  
a fine berth awaits,  
sign here with your rune  
and affix your dates.

Seven ships I see...  
mostly raiding craft,  
last one wrecked at sea,  
first one was a raft,  
every endeavor  
that a skipper dares,  
some fool, some clever,  
and how did you fare?"

"Very well, my thanks,  
they respected me  
from Indies to Manx,  
twice to Waikiki,  
three times round the horn  
following a scent  
that eluded form  
and fair brought me bent."

"Ahh, so then, again?"

"If it please you, sir,  
it's beyond my ken,  
I am seeking her."

"So. Then take a mask  
from the stitch of sail,  
we'll set you a task  
which you'll not bewail."

*Born to Juniper  
of the first water,  
and John the Carver,  
Junie, their daughter.*

## The Banker's Tale

The captain came to me  
and he described a face,  
“you find this child for me,  
don't know her name or place,  
might not even be born  
but I suspect she is,  
we're off monday morning,  
here's a last peck of biz,”  
and he sets at my stead  
a brass casket of pearls.  
It's exact what he said:  
“smoking eyes and red curls,  
probably a local  
bit of holy terror,  
from common working folk,  
with a bold burning stare.”  
Captain's careful orders  
how to disburse the queer,  
and as done to his words,  
there's only one such here.

## Orran Pruitt

If you brave a crawling fog  
it's like beryl glass,  
a hand engraves in your log  
what may come to pass.  
I once heard a serpent howl  
where the ice ran thick,  
you'll concentrate when your bowels  
and your watch run quick.  
I thought In bent pantomime  
*my fate's on the block,*  
which is why I spend my time  
regulating clocks.

## **Evelynne**

I used to be Evelynne;  
now I'm a ghost without hands.  
I'd be alive 'cept I been  
in the Pig an' seen this man  
stealing a casket of gold  
from under the attic stair.  
His plunder was bastard cold  
an' he grabs me by the hair,  
"dunna breathe a sound," he leers,  
furrin accent I ain't heard,  
hacks me throat, last I hears'm  
calling to some heathen lourd,  
then he whacks off both me hands  
with a kitchen cleaving ax,  
pickles'm in salt an' sand,  
sells'm to a priest in black,  
pours oil on the firewood,  
an' it's timeless never been  
'cept I maybe understood  
I used to be Evelynne.

## Sisters

Daddy didn't come home  
but he left us well fixed;  
we don't know where he roamed  
or what damn hell he risked.  
We get it second hand  
off our greek cook, Gina,  
crumbs from wrecked old men and  
uncle Okarina.  
Mom took it bad and croaked,  
I think we'd just turned three;  
Okie's the one who spoke  
for Indica and me.  
He hired expert help  
to run the plantation;  
he's teaching us to spell  
craftish on occasion;  
what flowers to gather,  
which fruit to never! taste,  
and how to blend mather  
with mandragora paste.  
He says we have to know  
high pharmacopoeia,  
why to rend and to sew  
the omni opera.  
That way we'll never want  
among the heathen fold,  
and to that end a haunt  
bequeathed to him of old  
pandora in a chest,  
blood-rights he got from dad.  
Indi says he's the best  
father we ever had.

## Uncle Okie's Will

I just turned sixty, feel heavy with age;  
I'm the last of our brothers to survive.  
We've left seventeen kids, twelve widowed wives,  
our bastion crumbles, it's for a new page.  
I've discharged my obligation to you,  
I expect you'll fathom five with the chest,  
nor need you pay as I've seen to the rest  
of our comrade way, relations, and crew.  
Hackett was sterile; you are Goonarr's kids;  
your mom killed herself with cobra venom  
because she couldn't face accusing men.  
But now there's no grace in keeping it hid.  
You are of sterling heritage, my dears,  
be thou healthy, sleep well, be of good cheer.

## Scuttlebutt

Goon went down in eighteen thirteen;  
seems a fitting date for a fiend.  
Him and eleven rum port men  
who warn't coming home again.  
Running bogus an' guns they were  
according to that bloke right there.  
All of 'em rich as Croesus lurd,  
nobody wearing shoes I heard,  
broached a final keg just before  
an' deep sixed within sight of shore,  
dead before they kiss the water  
cutty wander sark in their biz.  
Ain't *that* the way it allus is?

## Junie Moon

Mom worked in the Rose  
before she got hitched,  
with bells on her toes  
and nice in her niche.  
We're in these regions  
since Erik the Red,  
proper norwegians  
but Rijkjavik bred.  
My dad chisels wood,  
he's got a hard hand,  
his business is good  
and much in demand.  
I hear he carved god  
for some island king,  
seems mom got the nod  
and ringadingding  
about the same year  
as my ass got rich,  
but nobody's clear  
who's what with the which.  
Mom says there's a pile  
in the seamen's bank,  
"enough to beguile  
a baron of rank."  
I ain't never seen  
no nobleman's butt,  
I'm hoping they're lean  
and hard in the gut.  
Whatever my fate  
I won't shovel shit  
nor god dammit wait.  
I've been getting it  
with Sam the slater,  
best fucking I've had,  
see you all later,  
I gotta get dad.

## Old Men

We were in the Bent Elbow  
chasing after local fluff.  
The ale was mulled and mellow,  
good for laughs and genteel guff.  
Karina told the story  
of how he'd been castaway  
for five weeks in a dory  
on biscuit and nasty prey.  
Jan Rolf topped him with a tale  
about slave ship below decks.  
We hauled out the killer whale  
and all our favorite wrecks.  
How the Squealing Pig burnt down  
to hide a rotten murder,  
of the distance now in town  
and is it how much further?  
Junie came to take me home,  
*there's* one wave I plied alright,  
naked maids and fleeting foam,  
off to me grave, aye, good night.

# Post Scriptum

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## COMMENTS & SUBMISSIONS

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Submission must be in the body of an email unless otherwise agreed on.