

John Masefield (1878-1967)

4 *Cape Horn Gospel II*

Jake was a dirty Dago lad, an' he gave the skipper chin,  
An' the skipper up an' took him a crack with an iron belaying-pin  
Which stiffened him out a rusty corp, as pretty as you could wish,  
An' then we shovelled him up in a sack an' dumped him to the fish.  
That was jest arter we'd got sail on her. 5

Josey slipped from the tops'l-yard an' bust his bloody back  
(Which comed from playing the giddy goat an' leavin' go the jack);  
We lashed his chips in clouts of sail an' ballasted him with stones,  
"The Lord hath taken away," we says, an' we give him to Davy Jones.  
An' that was afore we were up with the Line. 10

Joe were chippin' a rusty plate a-squattin' upon the deck,  
An' all the watch he had the sun a-singein' him on the neck,  
An' forrard he falls at last, he does, an' he lets his mallet go,  
Dead as a nail with a calenture, an' that was the end of Joe.  
An' that was just afore we made the Plate. 15

All o' the rest were sailor-men, an' it come to rain an' squall,  
An' then it was halliards, sheets, an' tacks "clue up, an' let go all."  
We snugged her down an' hove her to, an' the old contrary cuss  
Started a plate, an' settled an' sank, an' that was the end of us.

We slopped around on coops an' planks in the cold an' in the dark, 20  
An' Bill were drowned, an' Tom were ate by a swine of a cruel shark,  
An' a mail-boat reskied Harry an' I (which comed of pious prayers),  
Which brings me here a-kickin' my heels in the port of Buenos Ayres.

I'm bound for home in the *Oronook*, in a suit of looted duds,  
A D.B.S. a-earnin' a stake by helpin' peelin' spuds, 25  
An' if ever I fetch to Prince's Stage an' sets my feet ashore,  
You bet your hide that there I stay, an' follers the sea no more.

1902

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