

Good Morning, Captain

The Captain counts destroyers –
Dauntless, Diamond, Decoy, Dragon,
corrals them one by one into his dock.
And when he's done destroyers, he starts on submarines –
Voracious, Venture, Vanguard, Vulpine, Vox.

And when the Captain dreams,
he dreams of all the things he's seen –
the fire on the glacier, explosions in the sea.
The Captain's been a hero. The Captain's done it all.
The Captain's got a lot of glitzy pins.

And when the Captain dreams,
the girls are wearing slinky things -
Emma, Lucy, Sarah, Charlotte, Claire.
The Captain's had his sweethearts. The Captain's seen it all.
The Captain's been the cat who got the cream.

And when the Captain dreams,
he dredges nightmares from the sea -
the slurpers and the suckers, the scuppered and the sunk.
They come with open mouths. They tick upon the hull.
They walk on crabby stilts and *whisper* things.

And when the Captain wakes,
he wonders why it's ten o'clock,
and who put pastel flowers up the walls.
Good Morning, says the bedspread. *Good morning*, says his life,
the bloodknot sliding shut around his neck.

The Captain counts his children
from the photos in the albums,
thinks a thought, then chases it away.
And just on the horizon, tacking fast, the wind behind her,
that little speck that's closer every day

Abigail Parry