

## 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*