

Robyn Hitchcock

"Ghost Ship"

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The ghost ship haunts the sea
She'll come back and marry me
The rust is where her heart should be tonight
Her face is where her fingers were tonight
A glassy chequered engine room
The speechless silence of the tomb
The manuscripts inside the womb unfurl
A girl
Translucent as a jellyfish
That palpitates upon a dish
She stings you with her gently falling curl
And sinking in the waters green tonight
I wonder where my lover's been tonight
The ghost ship changes tack
And stands becalmed; her sails are slack
The cabinboy lies on his back and sighs
The mayonnaise is oozing down his thighs
The bubbles rising from the deep
Where deadmen sing themselves to sleep
From oak and coral they do seep to say
"Okay
You throw open my future like a chart
See through my skin; into my heart
That flutters in my ribcage like a bird."
And the ghost ship sails on into someone's life
The air from bottles forms into
The skeletons of all the crew
In white they dance against the blue and wail
Their curling bodies flail around the sail
The figurehead before the mast
Stares back into the golden past
Across the wrinkled sea so vast she mourns
Forlorn
She flutters round me like a moth
That beats against mosquito cloth
And tries to eat her way into my dreams
And sinking in the waters green tonight
I wonder where my love has been tonight
The melons on the riverbank
Are bulging through decaying planks
Their beauty is so warm and dank and light
The captain wears a headless grin tonight

And silhouetted on the blue
The cook, the mate, the captain, too
They know not where or why or what they do at all
They fall
Like masonry in the abyss
That opens every time we kiss
I hear their laughter echo round the bay
And the ghost ship sails on into someone's life

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