

Davy Jones' Locker
by Nancy Martz

If I'm to write anything about ships and the sea, I must first acknowledge and second apologize to John Masefield, for no one could ever put it better. Many of us memorized his salt water vision somewhere along the way to an education, and it is worth repeating now and always. From 100 years ago, I give you

Sea Fever

by John Masefield 1913

*I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky.
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.*

*I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.*

*I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.*

J. M. 1013

I've sailed the Aegean, the South China Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and many others during day and night travels around the world, where 72% of our planet is covered by water. Most of the time, a bit of the sea fever Masefield describes caught me up. The only time I thought I would die was a late September crossing in a ferry from Dover to Calais in the dark. We passengers huddled together as the ferry rolled over and back, port to starboard, starboard to port, and rose and fell, bow to stern, and stern to bow cresting the waves. Happily, I've never been sea sick, but plenty of others were that night. Laden with cars and buses and freight, the ferry could easily have sunk, and I always shiver a bit recalling that night; so here is my version of sea fever:

*I oppose going down with the ship at night to the watery waste of the brine
And all I ask is a life boat and your ear to hear me whine
And to stay afloat away from the boat when it lists and starts to sink
And a life vest with a signal gun and a stiff mixed drink.*

N. M. 2013

