

In days of dust
and searing heat
Our souls parboil'd
in rusting pots,

We toil'd in bellies
of steaming beasts
To load and launch,
at least, our thoughts –

We dream'd of nights
not beat by fire
Or shots and screams and
dying words;

Through all, we sought
(with ev'ry race)
some sweet escape from death
We carried in our
– escritoire –
 – our letters home –
 – our carapace –
(In crannies of our waking dream
we secreted away, you see)
This certainty that ev'ry scream
could be – would be – should never be –
The dying breath
of men we knew
Our brothers on the beam
 whose songs of youth and hope and lust
 were spent – as ever such songs must –
 parboil'd in pots of iron rust

With friends both good and true
Whose heart beat (black and blue)
Shall ne'er gain sleep
 but start awake,
 escaping from a dream

Of days of dust
 and glory!
Of searing heat
 and hope!
Of love and blood and rusting pots
 of shit and shame and tightened knots
 of dying words and parting shots
 of broken men and Bergamot.

We served on bended knee
Her Majesty,
The misery:
In days of sword and steam.