

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.