

Snipes Lament

Now each of us from time to time, has gazed upon the sea.
And watched the warships pulling out, to keep this country free.
And most of us have read a book, or heard a lusty tale.
About the men who sail these ships, through lightening, wind and hail.

But there's a place within each ship, that legend fails to reach.
It's down below the waterline, it takes a living toll-
A hot metal living hell, that sailors call the "HOLE".

It houses engines run by steam, that make the shafts go 'round.
A place of fire and noise and heat, that beats your spirits down.
Where boilers like a hellish heart, with blood of angry steam
Are of molded gods without remorse, are nightmares in a dream.

Whose threat that from the first roar, is life living doubt,
That any minute would with scorn, escape and crush you out.
Where turbines scream like tortured souls, alone and lost in hell,
As ordered from above somewhere, they answer every bell.

The men who keep the fires lit, and make the engine run.
Are strangers to the world of night and rarely see the sun.
They have no time for man or God, no tolerance for fear,
Their aspect pays no living thing, the tribute of a tear.

For there's not much that men can do, that these men haven't done.
Beneath the decks, deep in the holes, to make the engines run.
And every hour of every day, they keep their watch in hell,
For if the fires ever fail, their ship's a useless shell.

When ships converge to have a war, upon an angry sea,
The men below just grimly smile, at what their fate might be.
They're locked in below like men fore doomed, who hear no battle cry,
It's well assumed that if they're hit, the men below will die.

For every day's a war down there when the gauges all read red,
Twelve hundred pounds of superheated steam, can kill you mighty dead.
So if you ever write their sons, or try to tell their tale,
the very words would make you hear, a fired furnace's wail.


These men of steel the Public never gets to know
So little's heard about the Place, that sailors call the hole.
But I can sing about the place, and try to make you see
The hardened life of men down there, cause one of them is me.

I've seen these sweat soaked heroes fight, in superheated air.
To keep their ship alive and right, though no one knows they're there.
And thus they'll fight for ages on, 'til steamships sail no more,
Amid the boiler's mighty heat and turbines hellish roar.

So when you see a ship pull out to meet a warship foe.
Remember faintly, if you can, **The Men Who Sail Below.**

Anonymous



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