

A Song before Sailing

Wind of the dead men's feet,
Blow down the empty street
Of this old city by the sea
With news for me!
Blow me beyond the grime
And pestilence of time!
I am too sick at heart to war
With failure any more.
Thy chill is in my bones;
The moonlight on the stones
Is pale, and palpable, and cold;
I am as one grown old.

I call from room to room
Through the deserted gloom;
The echoes are all words I know,
Lost in some long ago.

I prowl from door to door,
And find no comrade more.
The wolfish fear that children feel
Is snuffing at my heel.

I hear the hollow sound
Of a great ship coming round,
The thunder of tackle and the tread
Of sailors overhead.

That stormy-blown hulloo
Has orders for me, too.
I see thee, hand at mouth, and hark,
My captain of the dark.

O wind of the great East,
By whom we are released
From this strange dusty port to sail
Beyond our fellows' hail,

Under the stars that keep
The entry of the deep,
Thy somber voice brings up the sea's
Forgotten melodies;

And I have no more need
Of bread, or wine, or creed,
Bound for the colonies of time
Beyond the farthest prime.

Wind of the dead men's feet,
Blow through the empty street;
The last adventurer am I,
Then, world, goodbye!

About the Author

Bliss Carman (1861 - 1929) Born April 15, 1861 in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Son of William Carman and Sophia Mary Bliss (Sophia Mary Bliss was a descendent of Daniel Bliss of Concord, Massachusetts, the great-grandfather of Ralph Waldo Emerson; and was the aunt of...

Source: <http://poems.writers-network.com>