Sea Fever

By John Masefield (English, 1878-1967)

I must 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 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 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.

British poet John Edward Masefield was born in Herefordshire. He studied at Warwick School before training as a merchant seaman. In 1895, he deserted his ship in New York City and worked there in a carpet factory before returning to London to write poems describing his experience at sea. Masefield was appointed British poet laureate in 1930 and held that honored position until his death in 1967.