



THE LIGHTSHIP

She tugs at her chains with sullen urge,
Twisted around by a strong seas surge,
Stout and squat with her powerful mast,
Topped by a lantern that's shiny and vast.
Not for her the long China run,
Or steam to war with a twelve-inch gun,
No cargo of spice, or silk, or fur,
She lights dark reef where wrecks occur.

No need for her crew to check foreign charts,
No reaching fresh ports in far distant parts,
No voyage to oceans where albatross fly,
Or breaking thin ice where blue whales die,
No turbines to drive her to some cruel fate,
No hard drinking skipper, no buckaroo mate,
She's stuck to her chain, and trusts to her luck,
She lights the rocks that others have struck.

She's hard on her crew who never sail,
But serve the sea in a self made jail,

Chipping and painting and tending her light,
For the safety of shipping it has to shine bright,
Month on, month off, is their grinding shift,
To serve on a vessel that does but drift,
Round and around on her endless trip,
Till storm comes to show she's a rough weather ship.

It's then that her crew pay out more chain,
For it's started to blow and gusting with rain,
The glass is low and on comes fierce gale,
As she heaves and strains and rolls to her rail,
She can't dodge or run for shelter in lee,
She's anchored out there to face the wild sea,
A bitter wind howls in a frenzy of rage,
And breakers foam white on a mad rampage,
Her old plates creaking, she clings to her chain,
This sea won't break her, it strives in vain,
She keeps flashing warnings from her swaying mast,
And Big ships salute her as they sail safely past.

Owen D. Jones