

# The Brigantine

by Janie Meneely

Ease her down-two points off the starboard bow,  
See her topsails pulling and she's closing from the west.  
Dark as tar, let's pray she's just some fishing scow,  
A night like this could sprout a few more hairs upon your chest.  
It's all hands on deck now, ready with the running gear.  
We'll bring our head around and we'll damn well try to run.  
Friend or foe, she's got no reason being here,  
Cutting cross our bow like some hellion on the run.

Steady boys—I can't exactly make her out.  
Looks to be a brigantine, I think I see the spars.  
Lively now, we may just have to come about.  
I wish to God they'd show a light and tell us who they are.  
She's got her royals flying, with the wind right off her quarterdeck,  
And here we're barely making way, with zephyrs from the north.  
For all the years we've been at sea or been around the water, heck  
I think we're seeing something we ain't never seen before.

The old timers tell us all about the spectre ships they've seen  
We just sit and listen and hide our guffaws in our sleeves  
Tonight might make us wonder just what it is we do believe

Can you see—there's someone standing at the wheel  
Looks to be the starlight reflecting from his eyes  
Big as life—he's laughing like he's fit to kill;  
Did anybody notice that there ain't no stars tonight.  
She's got her royals flying, with the wind right off her quarterdeck  
And here we're barely making way with zephyrs from the north.  
For all the years we've been at sea or been around the water, heck  
I think we're seeing something we ain't never seen before.

Watch her go—did she even see us here?  
Prowling through the darkness like some demon on the outs  
Leave her go—set our course for outta here  
I'd just as soon not hang around in case she comes about  
And it's all hands on deck now, ready with the running gear.  
We'll bring our head around and we'll damn well try to run.  
Friend or foe, she's got no reason being here,  
Cutting cross our bow like some hellion on the run.

The old timers tell us all about the spectre ships they've seen  
We just sit and listen and hide our guffaws in our sleeves  
Tonight might make us wonder just what in hell we do believe