

The Sea

Roger Chittick

A silent yearning for the sea lies deep within me. Sometimes it even seems that I can hear the surf foaming in my ears; and that joyful, lilting freedom that comes with the sea seems to permeate my whole being. It is then, in a strange reverie, that I find myself once more on the deck of a good ship, heading for open water. I see the flying fish leap clear of the prow; I stand on the fantail to watch the wake as it boils up below me and forms a clear straight line to the distant line of horizon. I feel the mystic power of the night at sea, when the black water below and the myriad stars above seem so near that I can almost touch them. I know the fury of a storm at sea when the ship lurches and strains in mortal conflict with the elements. I know the peace of mind that accompanies the great arc of sun as it sinks into the western waters.

There is an everlasting power in the

sea — a sort of undefinable, irresistible drive that has forced those “who go down to the sea in ships, who do business in great waters,” to come to the sea. A great part of the power of the sea over the minds and bodies of men lies in the release it offers from the petty conformities, the duties and customs that are imposed upon men by society. The sea sets the spirit of men free; it flings nature in his face. It gives peace to frustrated minds, beauty to those who would search for it. The sea challenges those who have drifted for such a long time in an established pattern.

So, men, too tired for tears, too defeated for thought, too encumbered with the pettiness of other men to reach out for the greater things, forget the cities, the smoke-filled air, and go down again, if only in dreams, into the arms of the everlasting, serene, immutable sea.

The Night Scrubwoman

Joann-Lee Johnson

Night

Takes the old day

And washes it with dew.

She scrubs and scours

The faded hours

Until that day is new.