

Sea Fever by John Masefield

I must go 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 go 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 go 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.

Sea Fever

Activity Notes

- The poem portrays a strong longing for the sea.
- The imagery demonstrates the speaker's extreme familiarity with and fondness for the sea.
- His loving descriptions of life on the ocean establish the passionate, yearning tone of the poem.
- The imagery in the poem suggests an adventurous ocean that appeals to all five senses:
 - Visual:** a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking (Line 4)
 - Auditory:** the sea gulls crying (Line 8)
 - Touch:** the flung spray and the blown spume (Line 8)
- The rhythm of the poem gives the poem a song-like quality – it could be described as a Sea shanty
- **Example of alliteration:** Lines 3 and 10 contain the repeated consonant sound of the letter “w”. (The wheel’s kick” is a reference to the ship’s steering wheel spinning out of control. It also suggests that the tall ship is traversing very storm seas)
- **Example of personification:** In Line 4, the sea is personified when the water’s surface is referred to as the “sea’s face”
- **Example of a simile:** In Line 10, “the winds like a whetted knife”, appeals to the senses and helps the reader feel the cold wind blowing
- **Example of a metaphors:** In Line 9 when the speaker compares “the vagrant gypsy life” to the ocean. In Line 10 the word “trick” implies that the speaker’s life has been like a sea voyage and is requesting a peaceful afterlife.

More information about the author:

http://www.popflock.com/learn?s=John_Masefield

National Curriculum link:

KS2 English: Reading comprehension:

Maintain positive attitudes to reading and an understanding of what they read by learning a wider range of poetry by heart, preparing poems and plays to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone and volume so that the meaning is clear to an audience

Understand what they read by checking that the book makes sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context, asking questions to improve their understanding, drawing inferences such as inferring characters’ feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence