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On My First Voyage Out

John Anthony Fingleton

The mooring lines were hauled on board
The hatches battened down,
The lights of Cobh were shining,
As we passed that harbour town,
Then Roche's Point and open sea;
Our course was set 'Due South'
Towards the hot lands of North Africa,
That time – on my first voyage out.

Along the North West coast of France,
Towards the storm off Biscay Bay,
Where we spend two days going 'fore and aft'
Before we finally got under way.
The sardine boats off of Portugal,
I stood my night watch on the bow;
And rang the bell so the steering men,
Could reduce knots or change her prow.

We anchored off Casablanca Port,
While waiting for a berth,
The water carried voices,
The first Arab words I ever heard.
They came laughing, shouting, singing,
Across the warm night air,
It was there I heard a muezzin call,
The people for their prayers.

The next day we went alongside,
The First Mate called, 'All engines cease!'
Before the gangplank was fully lowered,
Came the traders, beggars, thieves,
One would sell you anything,
Another could steal the words out of your mouth,
But it is something I still remember –
That time – on my first voyage out.

We sailed on an air filled phosphate night,
The old blind man – they said he had once been a millionaire,
His voice filtered across the dusty water,
'Tell Queen Victoria, I'm still here!'

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Bio: John Anthony Fingleton: He was born in Cork City, in the Republic of Ireland. But has spent most of his adult outside of Ireland... Lived in the UK, France, Mexico. He is

at present in Paraguay. He speaks English, Gaelic, French and Spanish, as well as a splattering of African dialects, but mainly writes in English. He has been writing for as long as he can remember. Poems published in journals and anthologies in, Ireland, UK, USA, India and France as well as three plays produced. Poet of the Year (2016) Destiny Poets International Community. Poems read on Irish, American radio as well in Spanish on South American broadcasts. Also on some blog poetry websites. Contributed to four books of poetry for children. His poems are published in numerous national and international journals, reviews, and anthologies, and his first solo collection 'Poems from the Shadowlands' was published last November by CreatSpace and is also available on Amazon He uses the name Löst Viking for family historical reasons.