

Poetry Series

**Isabel Szurlej**  
**- poems -**

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# Ghosts (From Pirates Songs)

After bloody fight we became ghosts that night  
Moon derisively laughed  
Ocean devoured us and marked  
We died living forever in wonder  
Ho hey ho girl from hell killed us all  
We are part of the biome  
Absorb the red part a the light  
We walk naturally with  
Marine snow and flashlight fish  
Haul ropes all the time  
Right above us stretches the horizon  
What you have to do is reach out and touch it.  
It seems so close but it is unreal  
Hypnotic lull sways us  
With a half-moon and every soaking sail  
We dream of whores  
Will not pay them,  
We are ghost  
Want blondes and like redheads  
Though that color makes us mad  
Our chat recalled hoyden with one eye

Negative impacts in the shallow water  
Can be positive in the deep sea  
Storm is coming, unbridled dragon  
Batten down the hatches,  
Everyone salute the death  
Fury swallowed our gold  
Dropping many doubloons  
It doesn't know articles of code  
The tone of water swirls around  
Long rage and slowdown  
Unmerciful sea caused another  
Ship went down

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## Rick Cahoon (From Pirates Songs)

Imagine the land where it snows and  
The red bearded man with an ax  
White snowflakes cover all  
Even his ire and grudge  
Look at Rick Cahoon  
Who rise higher than us  
The giant with a disturbing gaze  
Our quartermaster, second in command  
When the ship is not in battle he is in charge  
He knows shipmates from all over the world and  
Free ports where he meets with merchants to trade  
He doesn't trust authority and division power  
But plunder and gain he likes as well  
They say he led the mutiny on a leaking vessel  
Where half of the crew took it and turning pirates  
He wore very fine coats  
More appropriated to royalty than to him  
To hide a hole in hand  
He supervised a duel once  
Its details are inconsistent  
The majority of us reported what transpired:  
Rick gave the signal and  
At odds pirates fired shots  
One smoothbore flintlock jammed  
The ball stuck and Rick knocked the gun out  
Stray bullet passed right through  
Made a slit in his hand the size of a walnut  
Despite the fact that Rick blood was spilled by accident,  
It caused the duel to end  
That way issue was untied

One man, one vote  
Pirates have their democracy and code  
Became well-established  
At Port Royal and St Mary's Island  
We usually elect quartermasters  
To represent the best interests of us  
They could veto decisions of masters  
But also punish us

Quartermaster is responsible for all supplies

For his double share:

Keeps track of ship's stores

Distributes food and drink

Keeps custody on booty

There will always be someone among us

Who craves more than was offered by his fate

Can Rick be that man?

Will he induce revolt and depose our captain?

Bosun has eye on him

It will be not easy beat Jim Grey

Invincible in the combat Grey became a legend

Rick is on quarter deck

The Spanish galleon with its painting sails is coming

He is first aboard and leads pirates boarding

He will secure any plunder to divide shares

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# Who Takes The Glory Of Dead Heroes?

The angel spread wings black  
In the rays of the first sun  
Although bestowed with divine light  
He is a gory herald of war  
Which will shed your blood

The sun is going down but the battle lasts  
These ones so pure colors of nature  
Had been covered with dead men of arms:  
Centuries wash away entire shame  
Who takes the glory of dead heroes?  
Splendor victorious empires  
It is too much for everyone  
Only angels can bear human blood

Where lying dormant treasures from South Seas?  
They sleep forgotten in sunken ships  
Many tried to reach them and never returned  
Did they find the treasures before their death?

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# Alone On Earth

I am alone on earth  
Thinking of universe inside my empire  
Some moments in my existence are  
Like freshly cut flowers:  
They are alive dying

Enclosed bundles of fibers  
Transmit information to the cells  
Building life in my consciousness  
Between bliss and enormity

The ticking of clocks is not for me  
It disappears in outer space  
I move freely  
Landing on the naked peaks in ecstasy  
Charged electrically  
The ego of gravitoelectromagnetism

I am nobody, like you  
Fading away  
Wearing the same veil decorated mealy callas  
That makes me mysterious  
Predominantly

I was creating my soul  
Shaped her from nothingness  
In mortal nudity  
Until she came to life,  
Excellent  
Acting against metempsychosis

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# Ocean Pearl

## (From Pirates Songs)

The ship like a well-dressed woman:  
Slender and fast  
Ballasted well with a crowd of men around her  
Rustling sails like wide skirts  
Touched by the wind she comes to life  
Skitters lightly, this way and that  
Tunes with the sea and shakes her stern  
Lifts her forecastle high  
Tossing her masts around in figure eights  
Sails around and shallow and deep  
Holds firm in the face of the worst  
Endlessly variable and extremely fast  
Always protects and nurtures us  
She replaced the Sweet Mary  
A ship that burned down  
Her name is Ocean' Pearl  
Brig about 100 feet long and 25 feet wide  
With twelve oars on each side,  
Two masts and square sails  
She carried about ten guns  
Three decks accommodate one hundred pirates  
We are the men of desperate courage  
Always ready for new expeditions  
But first we clean marine growth off the bottom  
At uninhabited island to keep a ship fast

Now in the grip of the ocean we indulge the time  
Trying to save what has been lost  
Our punishment wasn't death  
Protracted our fate  
We spun out whole life

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# Between My Guts And Stars

Between my guts and stars  
Somewhere in the middle  
Where the heavens stand apart  
My mortal excellence  
Creates an exemplar  
Focused on a divine idea

The clock spins indicates the hours  
Pendulum swings  
Could it be eternal?  
I'm sure that I discovered something  
That I do not comprehend

I idealized the space in the inverse square  
The period was timed again  
My body turned upside down  
On moveable scales and  
I saw the Absolute on the edge of justice

I covered all doubts tightly under many shells  
To finally be away from uncertainty  
The rigid rules weighed heavily on me  
So I lost them in the abyss.  
I looked for a universal law in vain  
In the center of my self  
Manifested by matter I became infinitely small and  
I was canceled

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# Achilles Treads Among Lying Warriors

Achilles treads among lying warriors  
they are dead  
all of them have their feast in the Olympus land  
leaving behind their bodies upon bloody fields  
they share own guts and corpses with the enemies  
Achilles wants to gain the glory  
the tribute that is due to heroes  
his silver armor shines in the battle tumult  
in splendor that is always so violent  
facilitated by sword killing sharply  
his accursed rage will be ahead of the fate  
blessing moments in the face of agony

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# Helmsman William Lee

## (From Pirates Songs)

Once upon a time  
Sailing ship was beached on ghostly island  
Helmsman William Lee was the one  
Who didn't die in the wreck  
But he didn't live either  
He stuck for years between worlds  
Doomed to sail through an endless storm  
Perpetuity haunted him  
Remained his body intact  
But his soul became a skeleton  
No one remembers now  
How he ended up on our brig  
He said he was a trained seaman  
But no one heard of him  
His steering skills were supreme  
Though he never did ded reckoning  
To reveal a latitude  
He used the sun and the horizon line  
(With sailing charts)  
He could sail from east to west with his eyes closed  
But sailing from north to south was hard  
Even for him because  
The water is constantly moving  
Going to the direction which is opposite and  
There are no land-marks  
In the coming tempest  
You are sailing into the enormous surge  
Winds rip sails to shreds and  
You end up overboard  
Between the devil and the sea  
plunged to your doom  
Finally death requires her due  
You can beg for the mercy  
But your life is ending  
The sea is not merciful  
William Lee knew that storm was coming and  
How long it would last

He set the ship closest to the oncoming waves  
We wrapped ropes around the waists  
The prow survived tons of falling water and  
We survived  
It was terrifying and intriguing  
How he dealt with storms  
Each of us individually felt that  
There was something out of this world about him  
But no one said it aloud

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