

# SAILING THIS NAMELESS SHIP

JUSTIN EVANS

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Sailing This Nameless Ship  
By Justin Evans

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Editor@blazevox.org



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## New Kind of Epic

It begins with a hero  
just the same as always  
but this time he never learns.

His lesson walks by over and over  
but he pays it no mind  
while he counts again and again  
the ever dwindling number  
of his crew, each taking their turn  
at death.

This part's the same, too:  
Soon enough the hero  
will be all alone, no one left  
to watch him perform  
his courageous deeds.

What's different you ask?

This time the hero  
dies alone.

He never comes home—  
no deity protects him  
or returns the corpse  
to his family.

This time we all forget  
his name.

## My Sins

are many. Small and hard  
they rival stars at night,  
sink like cherry pits—  
what my grandfather  
used to call stones.

At night I work them up  
from my stomach, keep them  
beneath my tongue where  
the underside turns black,  
spoils my breath.

I perform each sin  
like some perverse litany,  
feel how it rolls  
to the front of my mouth,  
becoming the only thing  
I ever want to taste.

## Lost At Sea

When I think of night I never think sky  
burning black.

I consider sleep, family, brief  
moments I am awake at odd

intervals. I never look for the moon  
at night. Sooner or later it always appears

and I am forgiven. Instead, I try  
to find the moon when it is still day,

predict where it will meet the horizon, guess  
how many days I have walked oblivious

to its pale form  
in the pale blue sky.

## Autobiography [10]

When I think back to November  
which only ended last week, I cannot  
remember at all where I put the checkbook  
after buying you a birthday present. But  
if I go back to 1974, the year you were born  
I can remember starting school. I can see  
the leaves turn yellow, feel the year's  
first chill, see myself sitting atop  
my father's shoulders for the last time.

\* \* \*

Each eulogy spoken is a calyx  
on death's yellow poem  
where loved ones and strangers alike  
turn gently along a river, cutting the hips  
of ancient, sloping mountains.

## Shock

This emptiness is normal, they tell you—  
how you float inside your own mind  
like a buoy cut from its line,  
wandering in a sea of darkness, unable  
to perceive current or tide.

*This is normal, the way it should be.*

What's more—you will never know different  
or recognize change until after  
the fact. Nothing of you will remain,  
so there is no sense in remembering  
who you were before. All that's left is to  
keep moving until your feet touch land,  
pull yourself safely to shore.

## Calypso with Odysseus

She hardly needed to lift her cheek  
to say her piece. Instead  
she used her energy to brush aside  
the soft dark curls from his ear,  
where her fingers paused  
for one brief moment before  
coming to rest on his scarred shoulders.

It was there in the dark shadows  
she whispered as he slept, her lips  
warming the cartilage beneath his skin  
where she erased the sound of Penelope  
giving birth to his son.

## Just This

Whenever I think of faraway places  
it's always Beethoven who comes  
to crowd my ears with music his  
insistence that I pay attention to him  
that scowl always appearing  
whenever I close my eyes  
picturing some distant tropic isle  
or a snowy mountain top in The Alps  
as if he's about to beat me over the head  
with that little baton of his tell me  
imagination is a poor substitute  
for what his music can make me know

## And This

Stopped moving in my middle age  
going only as far as I am forced  
to get the mail or buy milk. Fought  
my war & made my way home.