

Row

L. Landrigan, '39

'Time we were headin' back Joe. Blast this line, I say. It's forever gettin' tangled. You needn't laugh, fishface. What? A squall! Where? Say that's no squall; that's a man sized storm. Heave in and grab your oars.

'Good Lord, man, get a wiggle on. It's coverin' in the vessel. Row, man, row! Easy now! Watch that swell! Keep her head up. Hold her! Hold her! Steady now! Row for it. Easy now, there's another, head up to it. Now then, for it. Never mind mutterin'. Save your breath. Easy now, swing her nose. Thank God for a good dory, boy. Dammit, don't you think I know it's snowin'? Ain't me eyes filled with it? Lord, where is that vessel? She ought to be lookin' for us. Easy now! Head her into it. Steady, now! Row, buddy, row! The horn? No, we're down wind. They'd never hear it. Watch that comber! Easy now! Hold her up. Steady, row for it

'We're not lost, you fool, keep rowin'! It only seems a long time. Don't start thinkin', whatever you do! Keep your mind on your oars (Good Lord make the vessel find us. Mother of God, save us). Don't I know it's cold? Keep rowin' or you'll freeze, man! Who in blazes isn't tired, I'd like to know. It's this wind. Don't give in to it. Watch those combers! Keep rowin', Joe old boy. Think of Mary and little Mary (Good Lord take me back to my Martha)

'Joe! Joe, don't do that! You can't do that! I know you're sleepy but keep rowin' or you'll freeze. This wind goes clean through you and you just gotta keep rowin'. (Mother of God find the vessel for us). For the love of God, Joe, hold on to those oars. Pull, boy, pull, and watch those combers! What was that thump? Joe, your oar! You've lost an oar! Don't do that! You can't go to sleep there! Please, Joe! Damn your hide if this dory wouldn't swamp I'd fix it so you wouldn't sleep! Joe, get up! (Virgin Mother, don't let him sleep or he'll die on me, and please send the vessel)

'Thank God it's liftin' a little but O Lord it's cold. It'll be colder soon too. Where is that vessel? Keep rowin', that's what I've gotta do. Keep rowin'! Me

hands must be frozen. No feelin' in 'em. Leave 'em on the oars. What odds about hands if I get in alive. Still no vessel. It's pretty clear too. Must be about eight now. Fourteen hours! Lord I'm hungry and cold! Dear Jesus, send the vessel! Should see her by this time. No! She's missed us or gone down. Lord what a night! Forget it! What'll I do? Yesterday we were off Newfoundland. About thirty miles the Skipper said. That was nord'east. There's the sun. Put about for Newfy. Dear God give me strength! Thirty miles is a long pull. Forget it! I can make it. But Lord I'd love to sleep. Forget it! Sing, pray, think of Martha. That's it, I'll think of Martha. God love her! If I get back . . . Dear God lead me back, take me back! I'll take care of her. She's a good girl that Martha of mine. Lord I'll look after Mary and little Mary too. Poor Joe! You weren't very strong were you old man? I'll have good old Father O'Brien say a Mass for you, Joe. I wonder if there are ghosts. Stop or you'll go crazy. Where's the sun? The course? Keep on the course. Lord it's cold! Ice all over the place. Me clothes are frozen solid. Keeps out the wind tho'. The old hands are done for I guess. Frozen to the oars. Good idea that, freeze 'em to the oars. Good thing that wind shifted. Pushin' us right along. Lord I'm hungry . . .

'Sun's goin' down red. Dear Lord keep me goin' . . . There's a light. Two, three! A village! Thank God . . . Couldn't last much longer. Row, that's it row! Dear Jesus keep me goin'!

'There's the wharf. Can't beach her! Too much ice. Try the wharf. A good pull and get the hands off the oars. Poor Joe, better get him up. Old dory might want to go back out. Stiff! These hands aren't much good. Get the arms under and heave. Up on the slip. One, two, three! Good Lord, he's overboard! After him! You'll go in consecrated ground in spite of the sea, Joe. I have him! Lord if I only had me hands. Hook on the dory! Hook his arms over the side. Hold! Dear Jesus, help me! Up! Thank God, he's in! Now to get up meself. Lord if I had me hands! Easy now! This is a great dory, can't swamp her. Now then, to get him on the slip. Up! One, two, three! Good, he's there! Now up yourself. Easy! Use the elbows. These clothes are heavy! Up! Thank God . . .

'Walk! Can't walk! Where's the light? There! Crawl! Snow, might save me hands. Crawl! Lord,

that light seems far away but thank God I'm here. Mother of God . . . help me. Martha must be prayin'. The door at last ! Hit it with me head. Thanks be to God ! The light ! It's open. (Sorry ma'm . . . Sorry . . . Joe . . . Wharf.. Dory . . . Martha).



Happy in his verse who can gently steer
From grave to light, from pleasant to severe.

—Dryden.

To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

—Shakespeare.

Truths turn into dogmas then they are disputed.

—Chesterton.

