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Sailing to the Happy Isles

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SAILING TO THE HAPPY ISLES

On the Decennial of His Enlistment in the Navy

One might have thought, the skids well juiced, the soft-drink bottle broken on the bow, such a jury-rigged vessel would go down ch-gunk at its berth as soon as it got loose from the supporting and restraining ways. A real abortion: no place for the crew, iron to the water, balsam below, boosted by paddle wheels, propellers, oars and sails. Yet there it wallows by, seagoing farce: the S. S. Brady ten years out of port, bound for the baths of all the western stars. On the canted bridge the captain blots a chart, curses his sextant and lays another course to calm his paddling, screwing, rowing, tacking heart.