

At Sea

by [James Como](#) (January 2019)



Nine Daughters of Ægir, Nils Blommér, 1850

Now too late for Mass in Lucca

(as we mark north to Livorno), I

incline over the railing, wind-whipped,

pulled by the roil of fatality from a wine-dark sea.

I –

nine appear

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like alabaster, wafting,

or wanting to frolick.

So close that we might touch,

the largest eye-to-eye,

unfurled, perfect and still,

though surely racing to keep pace:

with a planet lurching about our star

and with me,

freeborn and forlorn.

forlorn yet freeborn.

Probing? I cannot say.

Delighting in her own implacability.

And so had I a bow I do know:

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I would do murder but for some mariner's curse.

(Who among us has never wayfared so?)

Then, frightened, I fall –
no. It is she who rises
abruptly, the others (their work done?)
dropping into abiding mist.

At once I wish them back,
to see *how* it is they haunt:
memories riding streams of unrelenting time.

Or:
they are someone else, nursing.
So, thankful, I repent.

James Como is the author, most recently, of