

Columbus Sailed the Ocean Green

In Praise of Columbus

by [Kirby Olson](#) (August 2020)



When Columbus sailed to Hispaniola
the natives came out in canoes with flowers.
Two great civilizations merged.
We wanted only their gold,
but they added syphilis.

A few years before, the Ottomans
sacked Byzantium.
Columbus sought gold
so that Isabella and Ferdinand
could push the Muslims from Seville.

Out they went by 1506,
when the last minaret went silent.
Turks were stopped in Slovenia,
and by the Greeks and Romanians,
when Vlad papered the forests with their heads.

The Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria
lit the harbor with sails

as Christ came to America,
and the New World was born,
as depicted by Salvador Dali in 1959.

«[Previous Article](#) [Table of Contents](#) [Next Article](#)»

Kirby Olson is a tenured English professor at SUNY-Delhi in the western Catskills. His books include a novel (*Temping*), about an English professor who starts a circus in Finland; a book of poems entitled *Christmas at Rockefeller Center*