

## A Sailor's Christmas

Twas the night before Christmas, the ship was out steaming,  
Sailors stood watch while others were dreaming.

They lived in a crowd with racks tight and small,  
In a 80-man berthing, cramped one and all.

I had come down the stack with presents to give,  
And to see inside just who might perhaps live.

I looked all about, a strange sight did I see,  
No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.

No stockings were hung, shined boots close at hand,  
On the bulkhead hung pictures of a far distant land.

They had medals and badges and awards of all kind,  
And a sober thought came into my mind.

For this place was different, so dark and so dreary,  
I had found the house of a Sailor, once I saw clearly.

A Sailor lay sleeping, silent and alone,  
Curled up in a rack and dreaming of home.

The face was so gentle, the room squared away,  
This was the United States Sailor today.

This was the hero I saw on TV,  
Defending our country so we could be free.

I realized the families that I would visit this night,  
Owed their lives to these Sailors lay willing to fight.

Soon round the world, the children would play,  
And grownups would celebrate on Christmas Day.

They all enjoyed freedom each day of the year,  
Because of the Sailor, like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone,  
On a cold Christmas Eve on a sea, far from home.

The very thought brought a tear to my eye,  
I dropped to my knees and started to cry.

The Sailor awakened and I heard a calm voice,  
"Santa, don't cry, this life is my choice."

"Defending the seas all days of the year,  
So others may live and be free with no fear."

I thought for a moment, what a difficult road,  
To live a life guided by honor and code.

After all it's Christmas Eve and the ship's underway!  
But freedom isn't free and it's sailors who pay.

The Sailor say's to our country "be free and sleep tight,  
No harm will come, not on my watch and not on this night.

The Sailor rolled over and drifted to sleep,  
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours, so silent, so still,  
I watched as the Sailor shivered from the night's cold chill.

I didn't want to leave on that cold dark night,  
This guardian of honor so willing to fight.

The Sailor rolled over and with a voice strong and sure,  
Commanded, "Carry on Santa, It's Christmas, and All is Secure!"