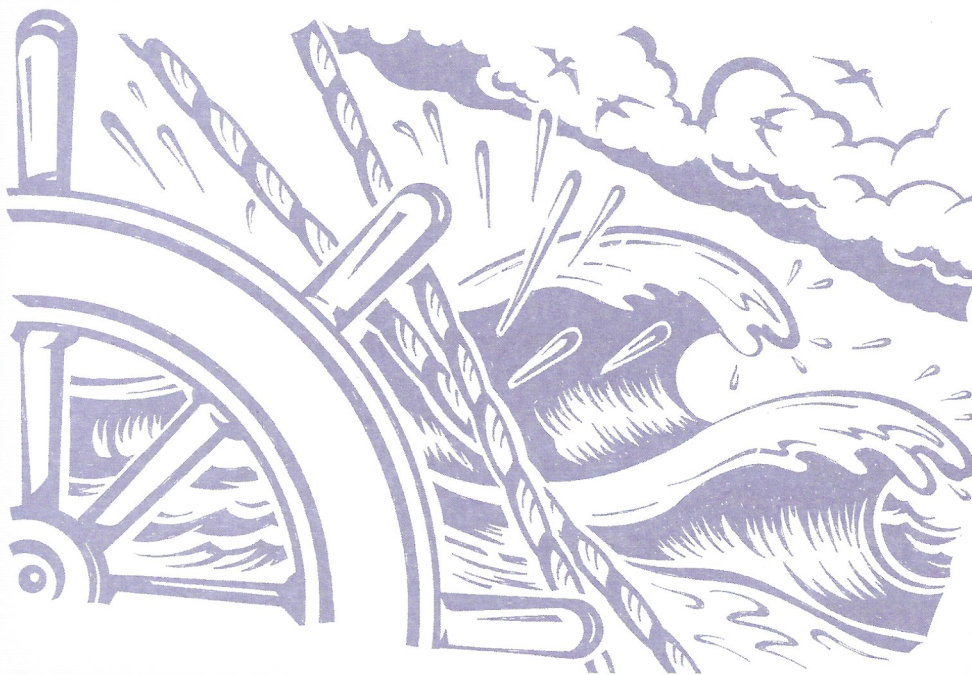


Sea fever



The poet John Masefield went to sea at a young age but, because of illness and his strong desire to become a writer, he deserted ship. Eventually he became a journalist and poet. He wrote 'Sea fever' in 1900, when he was 22, and it is still one of the most popular British poems ever written.



I must go down to the sea again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

5 I must go down to the sea again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

10 I must go down to the sea again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

John Masefield (1878–1967)

Glossary

spume froth, foam

trick a turn of duty steering the ship

vagrant wandering, homeless

yarn story