

## Lines on the Crew of the Caledonia by John Adams

*Who were shipwrecked on the Coast of Morwenstow in the night-storm of September 8th 1842*

They looked in dismay to the shore,  
As they shot through the blackness of night;  
And before them, on cliffs that re-echoed the roar,  
The billows dashed foaming and white:  
They quailed as they saw that Death's terrors were there  
And clung to the mast with the grasp of despair.

They were hurled by the storm to their graves,  
As though storming the door of that home;  
They were dragged by waves harnessed like horse to waves,  
Whose manes were white banners of foam;  
Whilst voices of strife to a wild dirge were strung,  
And loud the death-wail of the mariners rung.

But mourn not the moments of pain!  
Those terrors which hung on a breath!  
For the tempest-worn rocks and the billowy main  
Grew as smooth as a pillow in death;  
And the surges that swept them to die on that shore,  
Were chariots that bore them to rest evermore!\*

*\*One only of the crew of nine men escaped death. He was thrown on a ledge of rock, and scrambled up a precipice so steep and rugged that no human being would have attempted to climb it in broad daylight. I found him, a few hours after the wreck, speechless and covered in bruises, in a gully a quarter of a mile from the sea, and had him conveyed on a stretcher to my father's house, where he was tenderly nursed for several weeks.*

From *St Malo's Quest and Other Poems* by John Adams, Vicar of Stockcross. Henry S. King and Son, 1876.