

Townes Van Zandt, Silver Ships Of Andilar

Of those that sailed the silver ships
From Andilar I am the last
The deeds that rang our youthful dreams
It seems shall go undone
North for the shores of Valinor
Our bows and crimson sails were made
Our captains were strong, our lances long
And our liege the holy king

The hills did turn from green to blue
And vanish as on the decks we watched
But every thought in that noble company
Was forward bound
To the lifeless plains of Valinor
Where reigns the dark and frozen one
And with tongues afire and glorious eyes
We pledged our mission be

The clime from mild to bitter ran
The wind from fair to fierce did blow
Oath and prayer did turn to thoughts
Of homes left far behind
Longed every man for some glimpse of land
And the host that did await us there
But each new day brought only a sea
And sky of ice and gray

Thanks give no word can drag you through
Those endless weeks our ships did roll
Thanks give you cannot see those sails
And faces bleach and draw
Ice we drank and leather did chew
For the oceans are unwholesome there
The dead that slid into the seas
Did freeze before our eyes

Then a wind did fling the ships apart
Each one to go her separate way
The sky did howl, the hull did groan
For how long I do not know
And what men were left when the winds had ceased
Grew dull and low of countenance
For soldiers denied their battle plain
On comrades soon must turn

So one by one we died alone
Some by hunger, some by steel
Bodies froze where they did fall
Their souls unsanctified
Until only another and I were left
Then just before his flame did fail
We shone ourselves brothers-in-arms
To serve the holy king

Perhaps this shall reach Andilar
Although I know not how it can
For once again he's hurled his wind
Upon the silver prow
But if it should my words are these
Arise young men fine ships to build
And set them north for Valinor
'neath standards proud as fire