

# Townes Van Zandt, The Silver Ships Of Andilar

by Townes Van Zandt

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