Chow in Heavy Weather

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Chow in Heavy Weather

By Edward D. Schlitz

Going through the chow line with my knife & fork stuck
in the pocket of my chambray shirt,
feet splayed apart for balance,
tray grasped firmly in my hands.
Making my way through the chow line
trying to decide which portions of the exquisitely prepared
dinner would set best in my stomach.
Meat?  Potatoes?  Green beans?
Maybe just crackers, or perhaps an apple.
No bowl of soup this meal. No mug of coffee either.
No extra sloshing needed.
Cautiously I make my way to an open spot at one of the tables,
and just as cautiously put first one leg then the other over the bench,
precariously balancing my tray.
Finally sitting, legs tucked under the bench.
Setting my tray down at the first opportunity,
pulling out my knife and fork, one in each hand—
quickly picking up my tray as Westwind takes a hard roll
first to port, then to starboard.
And again, to port, and a lurch to starboard.
Now I wait for an in between wave to briefly level things out.

Quickly I set my tray down

shovel as much food into my mouth as I can

before the next hard roll to port necessitates hoisting my tray one more time.

Chew and swallow as I wait for the next in between wave to repeat the process.

And again, grabbing my tray and hoisting it in the air.

Chow in heavy weather can be a real pain.