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Remembering

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Remembering

By dave Schlitz

We have grown old now

The body aches

And

The bones creak

The meds no longer work the way they did

Our span of days grows shorter

It's already next week

Month

Year

Sometimes unbidden

Memories come

Perhaps when we are

Sitting in a rocker on the front porch

Watching early evening shadows slowly seep across the lawn

Or

Snoozing in an easy chair in the living room

As the old dog waits

For us to play with her again

Perhaps a vague shadow crosses the mind

A fleeting image

That slowly coalesces

Of our old ships,

Of our old stations,

Of our old buddies

As well as those

We would have liked to have smacked up alongside the head

Guys we busted our ass with

Got drunk on liberty with

and

Who had our back as we had theirs

And those guys who went out when duty called

And never came back

Once more

Pushing a 40 boat through heavy weather because folks need rescuing

Working on a black-hulled buoy tender setting markers on highways of water

Sailing on a small ship in a vast ocean keeping a lookout

Banging through polar pack on a worn-down old icebreaker

Knowing we would be back there in a heartbeat if we could

Donning our chambray shirts and dungarees

With our white hats cocked any which way

Always a little rough and tumble

Drinking, smoking, chasing the ladies

It didn't matter if you were standing watch on one of the white ones

Or scraping buoys on the black hulls

Or driving 40's across the harbor

When the chips were down and the job demanded our best

We were always ready

And willing

And able

And we remember