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The Midwatch

Harry Mayer

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The Midwatch Harry Mayer

The XO's in the shower
and the Captain's in his bed.
The Chiefs are playin' poker
as we're steamin' to the Med.

"I'll take that bet and raise you"
is what the Bo'sun says
from the table in the Chiefs' Mess
as we steam full speed ahead.

He says, "From the Seychelles to Mombassa
I've sailed the seven seas.
I tussled with the Tongans
done what the hell I pleased.

I rumbled with the Russians
and made war on Charlie Kong.
Dumped some mines into his harbor
the one they called Haiphong.

I punched a bloke in Fiji
then I whacked him with my fid.
Fact the only thing that scares me ...
is when the Ensign's got the mid."

"The Ensign's got the midwatch, boys
the Ensign's got the mid.
Yes, the only thing that scares me
is when the Ensign's got the mid."

Relieve the watch is sounded
he staggers from the head.
His eyes are red and bloodshot
they call him Ensign Fred.

Now Freddie is a ring knocker,
Class of Oh Oh One
Commanded plebes one summer
and thought that it was fun.

A midshipman cruise in Naples
made him wise beyond his years.
But as anyone will tell ya'
he's still wet behind the ears.

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And to the bridge he rises
to conn the ship of steel.
He tries to look his wisest
but exudes a youthful zeal.

The Ensign's got the midwatch, boys
the Ensign's got the mid.
Ain't no need to worry cause
the Ensign's got the mid.

He barks his orders smartly
as he turns the ship to port.
Rechecks his rudder angle
then he yells at Seaman Schwartz.

Now off the bow there shines
The faintest light you'll ever see.
Perhaps a surface contact
at bearing two two three.

Combat ... Conn he pages
There's a light that I now see.
But I have no radar contact
it's bearing two two three.

In Combat sailors snicker
cause the bearing it is clear.
The Ensign's voice it quivers
they detect a trace of fear.

The Ensign's got the midwatch, boys
The Ensign's got the mid.
Tonight, will be a long one 'cause
the Ensign's got the mid.

The light is getting bigger
and brighter as we speak.
Freddie calls the Captain
his voice begins to squeak.

Oh Captain! Oh, my Captain!
There's a light that's off our bow!
Oh Captain! My dear Captain!
The bearing it is foul!

The Midwatch Harry Mayer

Oh Captain! Oh, my Captain!
Please don't think me rash!
But Captain! Oh God, Captain!
I fear we're going to crash!

General Quarters! General Quarters!
is what the Captain screams.
All hands to Battle Stations
brace for shock off starboard beam.

The Ensign's got the midwatch, boys
Oh, the Ensign's got the mid.
Now it's time to worry cause
The Ensign's got the mid.

From the forecastle to the fantail
decks become a blur of blue
From their bunks the sailors scramble
a trained and ready crew.

The XO in the shower
slips and bumps his head.
The Captain in his stateroom
stumbles out of bed.

To the bridge the Captain races
his face is filled with fear.
He knows the next few minutes
could mean the end of his career.

Report the Captain orders,
"Is the surface picture bleak?"
The Captain's in his boxer shorts
with bedroom slippers on his feet.

The Captain's got the midwatch now!
Yes, the Captain's got the mid.
Things are looking brighter, boys
'Cause the Captain's got the mid.

As the Captain looks to sea
his commanding presence looms.
He sees no surface contact ...
Just a bright and rising moon

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He says, "Oh Ensign, silly Ensign
Just look what you have done.
We're now at general quarters
Let's talk one on one."

From the bridge our heroes exit,
both the Captain and the kid.
To discuss this revelation
of what the Ensign did.

The Captain says, "I don't make idle prattle
I've sailed through fierce typhoons.
Commanded ships in battle
launching lightning-fast harpoons."

A courageous naval leader
must have confidence and grit.
Your word becomes your bond, son
don't be a stupid shit!

Be like a solid oak, my lad
cut and freshly hewn.
And don't sound general quarters
for a bright and rising moon!

Secure from general quarters
sounds throughout the ship.
"Now go and stand your watch, my son
no more commotion on this trip."

The XO's back in the shower
And the captain's back in bed
The Chiefs' are playing poker
As we steam full speed ahead.