

## Ship-building

by [Diane G. Scholl](#) in the [October 14, 2015](#) issue

The feel of awl and augur in his hardened hands,  
the rough hull rimed with salt, a whittled plug  
he made himself, so tight he set his teeth!  
His handiwork behind him, Norway a miniature  
carved in the distance, he watched the gray Atlantic  
like a ravenous whale devour everything between.

The story ends, and yet begins again. Here  
in a foreign port, his touch begins to read  
each sign, the curves and swellings, splintered  
keel and patchwork. How his heart quickens  
when he finds his father's fishing boat, familiar  
as his name, the family build, their house  
nailed fast above the rocky harbor.

And yet begins again. How the found word both  
fits and startles, an oracle recovered just in time,  
just when it's needed, just before faith slips  
away like my great-grandfather's wedding coat,  
ruined in a flooded basement with old books  
and portraits, speckled sepia like a gull's egg,  
water-marked and too far gone to keep.