

PASSAGE

Librettino by Evan Hause
based in part on Goethe's "The Erl-King" and
"The Shallop on Hudson Bay" by Henry Van Dyke (*The White Bees*)

One shallop bobs upon the lonely sea,
It is father and son and languishing coterie.
The son steers.
The father points feebly to an arch of clouds.

HUDSON

"Son, do you not see the way?"

POETS

Brave captain, rise up! Forget your mutinous hell-bound ship.
Some colorful flowers are on the shore,
wild bees gather in busy hives
in a golden gateway city where your name is honored.

"Son, do you not hear good fortune's voice?"

In my deepening dream I see that splendorous river
that led us on two mellow autumns past in our Half Moon.

God has never poured a stream so royal
through a land more rich.

Who can tell what new lucky chance
awaits the fearless heart.

I groped among the inlets and the isles
like a blind man
to find the passage
to the Land of Spice.

I sought the Oriental passage then and I seek it still!
Look, friends, our voyage is not done.
We hold by hope as long as life endures!

the honour of our life
Derives from this: to have a certain aim
Before us always, which our will must seek
Amid the peril of uncertain ways.
Then, though we miss the goal, our search is crowned
With courage, and we find along our path
A rich reward of unexpected things.
Sail ahead and take fortune as it fares!

SON

"Father, such a passage we shall never reach."

"I hear the wind in the way you taught me to
hear it."

Dear Father,
as our faithful shipmates succumb to death
and you to dementia,
I cry and laugh all at once at the
recognition that I know not
where I am heading.
I am lost and alone,
I only knew your sea, your capes, your bays.

You are silent and I see only nameless
outlines on the horizon,
glints on the wide waves
that are gone as fast as they appear,
mirages of ships.

I see your face in the spindrift.
The swells are your arms
cradling our very craft.
Alas, my own mind is giving way
at the end of these longest of days.