

Terry's Way

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Autograph the final salute
On the back of an old POD*
And walk the way of the mid-watch.

Past dark passageways tinted with red lamps,
The half dead stench of berthing spaces
And the snores of two hundred sailors
Stacked and packed in tiny rooms.
Undog the doors, the watertight hatches,

Turn and walk away.

Aluminum ladders,
To the 01 level, the service boom,
To the fire hoses, power cables, and support lines
That feed life into the black whale shape
Some forty feet below.

Walk out and stand on this arm,
Out above the Cooper River,
The half-submerged submarine,
Above all contact with the world.

Stand on the edge of the Lake**
The very edge and step out.
Throw this broken soul into the deep.

*Plan of the Day: daily schedule of on board activities.

**USS Simon Lake (AS-33): submarine tender. At the time of death this ship was stationed at the Naval Weapons Station, Charleston, SC, located on the Cooper River.