

Style Contrast in Passages about Being on a Body of Water

— Excerpts from Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea* (New York: Collier Books: 1980), 28-29; 60-61.

Sometimes someone would speak in a boat. But most of the boats were silent except for the dip of the oars. They spread apart after they were out of the mouth of the harbour and each one headed for the part of the ocean where he hoped to find fish. The old man knew he was going far out and he left the smell of the land behind and rowed out into the clean early morning smell of the ocean. He saw the phosphorescence of the Gulf weed in the water as he rowed over the part of the ocean that the fisherman called the great well because there was a sudden deep of seven hundred fathoms where all sorts of fish congregated because of the swirl the current made against the steep walls of the floor of the ocean. Here there were concentrations of shrimp and bait fish and sometimes schools of squid in the deepest holes and these rose close to the surface at night where all the wandering fish fed on them.

In the dark, the old man could feel the morning coming and as he rowed he heard the trembling sound as flying fish left the water and the hissing that their stiff wings made as they soared away in the darkness. He was very fond of flying fish as they were his principal friends on the ocean. He was sorry for the birds, especially the small delicate dark terns that were always flying and looking and almost never finding [. . .]. Why did they make birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel? She is kind and very beautiful. But she can be so cruel and it comes so suddenly and such birds that fly, dipping and hunting, with their small sad voices are made too delicately for the sea.

[. . .] He looked across the sea and knew how alone he was now. But he could see the prisms in the deep dark water, and the line stretching ahead and the strange undulation of the calm. The clouds were building up now for the trade wind and he looked ahead and saw a flight of wild ducks etching themselves against the sky over the water, then blurring, then etching again, and he knew no man was ever alone on the sea.

“Three Shots”: Ernest Hemingway’s Nick Adams

— Mark Twain from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, as reprinted in *Literature in Context: Restoration to Post-Modernism*, 2nd edition (Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2003).

"Not a sound anywheres--perfectly still--just like the whole world was asleep, only sometimes the bull-frogs a-cluttering, maybe. The first thing to see, looking away over the water, was a kind of dull line--that was the woods on t'other side--you couldn't make nothing else out; then a pale place in the sky; then more paleness, spreading around; then the river softened up, away off, and warn't black any more, but gray; you could see little dark spots drifting along, ever so far away--trading scows, and such things; and long black streaks--rafts; sometimes you could hear a sweep screaming; or jumbled up voices, it was so still, and sounds come so far. . . . And you see the mist curl up off of the water, and the east reddens up, and the river, and you make out a log cabin in the edge of the woods, away on the bank on t'other side of the river, being a wood-yard, likely, and piled by them cheats so you can throw a dog through it anywheres; then the nice breeze springs up, and comes fanning you from over there, so cool and fresh, and sweet to smell, on account of the woods and the flowers. . . ." (287–88)

"Pretty soon it darkened up and begun to thunder and lighten; so the birds was right about it. Directly it began to rain, and it rained like all fury, too, and I never see the wind blow so. It was one of these regular summer storms. It would get so dark that it looked all blue-black outside, and lovely, and the rain would thrash along by so thick that the trees off a little ways looked dim and spider-webby; and here would come a blast of wind that would bend the trees down and turn up the pale underside of the leaves; and then a perfect ripper of a gust would follow along and set the branches to tossing their arms as if they was just wild; and next, when it was just about the bluest and blackest--*fss!* it was bright as glory and you'd have a little glimpse of tree-tops a plunging-about, away off yonder in the storm, hundreds of yards further than you could see before; dark as sin again in a second, and now you'd hear hear the thunder let go with an awful crash and then go rumbling, grumbling, tumbling down the sky towards the under side of the world, like rolling empty barrels down stairs, where it's long stairs and they bounce a good deal, you know." (250–51)