A “Vindi” Boy Reflects.

Strolling along a deserted beach,
Leaving imprints, in the sands,
I gaze out, where the sea meets sky,
And think of far off lands.

You wonder about, a life long spell,
In the Mercantile Marine,
Forty four years, flitted by so fast,
Or is it only, just a dream?

Was that really, bombs exploding,
At the entrance to Port Said,
As we anchored, awaiting orders,
While the jets flew over head.

Did we really carry tanks on deck,
To Penang and Singapore,
Was that massive shells, for battleships,
Stowed down tight, in number four.

Visiting countless, ‘shady’ bars,
Drinking ‘substances’, tepid and warm,
It can’t be me, I’m sure it was’nt,
With a “maid” of “doubtful” charm.

Scrupulously measured, tea, sugar, and milk,
One knife, one spoon, one fork,
The Board of Trade “whack”, for seven long days,
And they expected you to work!!!!

Did we really “swing” off Samson Posts,
Tall masts, without restraint,
Did a British Tankers funnel,
Really use, five colours of paint.

The hissing of an old steam winch,
With its noisy, uneven clatter,
Were they really Suez boat men,
Yelling out, in Arab chatter.

From the freezing winds of Canada,
To the heat of the Java shore,
Cold or hot, it was your lot,
You still came back for more.

Was money lenders really there,
On many a “channel” night,
When ‘Crown & Anchor’ ‘ cleaned’ you out,
With landfall just in sight.

With derricks all topped, and gangway down,
The engines rung to, “finished”,
A surge of elation swept through the ship,
Past moans, and groans diminished.

“Pay off day” at last came round,
What heavenly joy, it did bring,
The Publican’s tills, in West India Dock Road,
So merrily, they did ring.

Leafing through my discharge book,
Remembering the strife, and hilarity,
Its all down there in black & white,
Stamped, in cold, harsh, clear, reality.

by Jim Morrison
Mount Maunganui, N.Z.