Alas...

We Remember

A Poem by Ryan McRae
FOREWORD

This poem is about the Mary E. O’Hara shipwreck that occurred on January 21, 1941, that claimed the life of the author’s great-great-grandfather Edgar Veno. In addition to Edgar, the incident also claimed the lives of 17 others, including Gloucester fishermen John Sheen and Andrew Fay.
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BY RYAN McRAE

They departed from Gloucester, and sailed into the ocean...
   Into an awful commotion, into an
   unknown disaster.
It was an ordinary morning for everyone,
   January 21, 1941.
Or, as many know it, that one fateful Tuesday.
   Eighteen deceased...only five survivors
The Harbor’s trusted waters proved to be liars.
   On that cold winter day, no warning came.
Instead endless grief, and lives in ruin.
   In dreadful sorrow, those men were lost,
A sacrifice too great a cost.
   Those men, as they clung to their faith,
Called out to God, and pleaded to the sky...
   To please save their souls, they did not
   want to die.
Their limbs weak and their bodies frozen,
   Nothing was braver than those fishermen.
In the scorning seas, left with no chance,
   This was not the way it was to end...
In hopeless peril and in slow motion,
   Striking a barge, and in dreadful fashion-
They were called home, but not to Gloucester,
   Where their widows remained...
Not with their children, who felt endless pain...
   But to Heaven, where their souls remain.
Their bodies, though, were left where they served.
   And where most continue to be...lost at
   sea.
Fourteen missing, never to be seen again.
   Not even in a casket at wakes and
   funerals.
Some only had just cenotaphs…
    Where their loved ones prayed,
And many stood asking;
    Why could they not come home that one
    Tuesday morning?
Alas...we remember.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ryan A. McRae, age 19, is a senior majoring in History at Coastal Carolina University in Conway, South Carolina. He is a native of Beverly, MA, and spent much of his adolescence in South Carolina. Ryan has numerous family connections in Gloucester (where his father and paternal grandparents are from), and he has a long line of ancestral ties to Cape Ann. Along with being a full-time student, Ryan works as a Notary Public and enjoys writing, painting, nature photography, and other fine arts. He also enjoys spending time in historic areas and national parks.