A silver sail, the ocean loner,  
Is lurking in the azure mist. 
What has she lost in foreign corners?  
What in her homeland did she miss?

Her mast is clattering and bending  
Midst whistling wind and raging wave.  
Alas, she seeks no happy ending,  
Nor runs from happiness away.

Beneath – the crystal torrent tempteth,  
Above – the golden rays caress,  
Yet she, rebellious, longs for tempests  
As though a tempest granted rest.
A sail is gliding in the torrent,
Enveloped in a bluish haze.
What did it seek 'mid breakers foreign?
What did it leave in native bays?

The tempest roars, the sea is riven,
The mast gives in: it bends and creaks.
No, not by joy this sail is driven,
And 'tis not joy it vainly seeks!

Beneath, the stream is deep and quiet;
Above, the clouds are soft as fleece...
Alas! It longs for storms and riot,
As if a storm could bring it peace.
A white sail gleams alone out yonder
Amid the ocean's pale-blue haze...
What quest has driven him to wander?
Why has he left his native bays?

The waves crest as the fresh wind rises,
The mainmast bending in the breeze...
It is not happiness he prizes,
Nor is it happiness he flees!

Beneath, the azure current flowing;
Above, the golden sunlight glows...
Perverse, he seeks the storm winds blowing,
As if in storms to find repose!
A solitary sail that rises,
White in the blue mist on the foam, –
What is it in far lands it prizes?
What does it leave behind at home?

Whistles the wind, the waves are playing,
The laboring masthead groans and creaks.
Ah, not from pleasure is it straying,
It is not pleasure that it seeks.

Beneath, the azure current floweth ;
Above, the golden sunlight glows.
Rebellious, the storms it wooeth,
As if the storms could give repose.