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The Estuary

Reference number PT1034

Light, stillness and peace lie on the broad sands,
On the salt marshes the sleep of the afternoon.

The sky's immaculate; the horizon stands steadfast,
level and clear over the dune.
There are the voices of children, musical and thin,
Not far, not near, there in the sandy hills;
As the light begins to wane, so the tide comes in,
The shallow creek at our feet silently fills;
And silently, like sleep to the weary mind,
Silently, like evening after day,
The big ship bears inshore with the inshore wind,
Changes her course and comes up through the bay.

Rolling along the fair deep channel she knows,
Surging along, right on top of the tide.
I can see the flow'ry wreath of foam at the bows,
The long bright wash streaming away from her side:
I can see the flashing gulls that follow her in,
Screaming and tumbling, like children wildly at play,
The seaborne crescent arising, pallid and thin,
The flat safe twilight shore shelving away.

Whether remembered or dreamed, read of or told,
So it has dwelt with me, so it shall dwell with me ever:
The brave ship coming home like a lamb to the fold,
Home with the tide into the mighty river.