

Bucksport, Tennessee

*When I was just a little boy, before I went to school
I had fleet of forty sail I called the Ships of Yule."*

.... Bliss Carmen

*How well do I recall the scenes these lines bring to mind
In my own small schoolhouse, inspiring me to find
Strange, exotic place names on old maps of the world
Mostly drawn in coral pink where the Union Jack unfurled
How I strove to conjure sights of every foreign land
How I ached to see them, with my own eyes, first-hand*

*I dared to dream, to hope, to wish and fantasize
That on some distant sunny day I might realize
The pleasure and the wonder of witnessing myself
The farther reaches of this world and not just thru' a shelf
Of souvenirs and keepsakes someone else has found
But to be there in the flesh, to stand there on that ground*

*But, like most of us, I was obliged, alas, to ratchet back
Such dreams and wishes, and bear lamentably the lack
Of opportunity and means to journey as I would
Life intervened and I paid heed as I must and could
Work came first, the children grew, youth edged into age
Daily was due diligence foremost on my page*

*Not one regret can I count in those years of joy
Among friends, a loving wife, my darling girls and boy
But time whirled on, as always, to take them to their lives
As it must, and as is right; so an empty nest survives
Then did the morning sun light up a new horizon
And new skylines now for me to lay my restless eyes on*

*So now we've travelled, friends and I, to some distant places
Deserts, cities, mountains, isles, falls and oases
Ruins, canals, sunlit shores, lands of many peoples
Monuments carved in stone, cathedrals' stately steeples
Yet we've glimpsed but a fraction of what there is to see
And know for sure that never, ever will there be
Time enough left in our lives to see what yet awaits
Before our passports need be stamped at the Pearly Gates*

*And it seems to make no difference, for all we've seen and learned
Plainly tells us to accept what "is" and not be too concerned
About what we may never see since time is running low
For all the world, all its lands and all its sights will show
Things do change from place to place, but nothing's really new
Be your travels long or short, manifold or few
All mothers love their children, plead the best for them they can
Of their chosen deities, in our brotherhood of man
It matters not how near or far ... Venice, Brisbane, Rome
What's confirmed in foreign lands was learned years ago at home
So it's just as well to travel as to France and Gay Paree
From High Plains, Manitoba, to Bucksport, Tennessee*