

The Painting (Homer, "Breezing Up")

One Gloucester man, three little men-in-training,
With an air of casual competence,
No marker buoys in sight.
One wraps himself against the chill, and leans,
Opposed to the swell, with eyes that sparkle,
Lips that part in delight at the surge and smell
Of the sea.

Does the boat work or play today?
The oil skin hat, the large hands rough as the
Rope they haul to bring the skiff about -
Gloucester, the town that stinks of hard labor,
All say work - a training session for New England
Squires, learning how to joust and live with
Neptune in the lists.

The shrouded boy in the bow, though, with his
Lace-up shoes seems not a fisherman.
No scales cling to his clothes.
The tart spume tingles on his tongue.
He alone seems flying, like the skiff.
The boy could shift his foot mere inches and
Slide, wide-eyed, into the restless green swells
To catalog the wonders of the deep.

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