

Lady of the Lakes

By

O William

Five great Lakes with five great ships
That built five great states
Amidst the storms and freezing cold,
Houses built of brick with chimneys
That belched black smoke skyward,
Factories and steel mills
That built America.

These five great lakes
With oar boats and steamships
And men, who went down to sea,
Some went down to sleep
With the eternal darkness.

From the five great states came
Tractors, Cars, Trucks, and Railways
Produce and Products,
That nurtured us,
Kept America going.

The five great ships no longer
Ply the lakes with their sails unfurled
Vacant Farmhouses now dot the land
Smokestacks no longer send their soot up
Factories and steel mills closed down,
Stockyards, railyards, car lots, dockyards,
Slaughterhouses, warehouses, parking lots
Big garages that fixed the mighty engines
Of trucks which rumbled over roads
Empty.

The wind comes in from the lakes
As its always has, and
The waves rip and roar against the shore
As it always has;
But the Men do not go down sea
As they always had;
The ebb and flow of these eternal waters
The immense face of five great lakes
Amidst the changing of storms.