

NORTHUMBERLAND LIGHTS

W. ALLISTER REID

“There were a light above the traps to-night,
The traps MacConnell set—and I’m afraid,
Because my lads and you go out there at the dawn
And lobsterin’s at best a ticklish trade.
You youngsters don’t believe me when I say
I seen it glowin’, every time, outside
The harbour mouth—So help me, God, I have!—
And every time it showed, somebody died.
It doesn’t matter what the day is like,
Or how the tide is runnin’, or the wind
Is blowin’—one of us’ll have to go.
Remember Johnson?”

He went out to find
His brother—and HE ain’t yet been found.
The lights were glowin’ just the night before—
I seen ’em, so did he—but still he went,
And all the time his brother’s safe ashore!
And Elliot.

The rope he didn’t see
Around his foot, that pulled him in
When he threw out the traps. Drowned like a rat
He was. A fine lad, too, without a sin.
The same light showed above the traps to-night,
I seen it out there, wink and gleam and glow,
And I’m afraid, because my lads and you
Will sail at dawn—and one of you will go!”

So spoke the aged fisherman, and we
Listened to the shore breakers thundering.
While glances flashed from him, to him, to me,
And, hushed, each watched the other, wondering.