Penlee

The cold sea covets one more life The crewman leaves his tender wife Drags on his boots and overcoat Now he's running for the boat

He fights his way down to the shore The rocket's bangs have gathered more With anxious nod he greets the Coxn Joins his brothers on the Watson

The whistle shrieks, the diesels roar The hammer clangs – she's out the door Pounding headlong down the slip Her passage planned to save a ship

The breakers pound the valiant vessel To tunes of tortured straining metal As if the hull begins to crack But Lifeboatmen just don't turn back

They find their quarry in dire plight Awash and plunging in the night They try to close, to pass a line The last report – she's doing fine

Then distant drumbeats swell until A Sea King hovers o'er the kill This clattering storm bird of the night Upon its cone of trembling light

With inch precision searching swells For a clue some soul to tell But all she finds this night so evil Is wreckage and the stench of diesel

The ship is lost, the Lifeboat too Along with company and crew The greatest gift a man can give To give his life that another might live

So we recall with painful pride Ten years on the men who died And others like them, hundreds more Serving round our nation's shores

So when it's blowing, raining, night Let's not forget these heroes plight Let's pray for them and what they do Our ever gallant Lifeboat crews Ed Fletcher