

**Zeke Hecker** was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1947, and attended the Lawrenceville School and Harvard College. Since 1971 he has lived in Guilford, Vermont, and taught English at Brattleboro Union High School. He is principal oboist of the Pioneer Valley Symphony and the Windham Orchestra, co-founder of Friends of Music at Guilford, and a member of the board of directors of the Consortium of Vermont Composers. Primarily self-taught as a composer, Zeke Hecker has written over 90 works, including several operas. His works have been performed by the aforementioned musical organizations as well as the many others around the country. He is interested in those realms where words and music meet. See his profile at the [Kalvos Domain website](#).

English translation from *Heine's poem, the North Sea, translated by Howard Mumford Jones* (Chicago, Open Court Pub. Co., 1916)

### Meeresstille

Meeresstille! Ihre Strahlen  
Wirft die Sonne auf das Wasser,  
Und im wogenden Geschmeide  
Zieht das Schiff die grünen Furchen.

Bei dem Steuer liegt der Bootsmann  
Auf dem Bauch, und schnarchet leise.  
Bei dem Mastbaum, segelflickend,  
Kauert der beteerte Schiffsjung'.

Hinterm Schmutze seiner Wangen  
Sprüht es rot, wehmütig zuckt es  
Um das breite Maul, und schmerzlich  
Schaun die großen, schönen Augen.

Denn der Kapitän steht vor ihm,  
Tobt und flucht und schilt ihn: "Spitzbub'!  
Spitzbub'! einen Hering hast du  
Aus der Tonne mir gestohlen!"

Meeresstille! Aus den Wellen  
Taucht hervor ein kluges Fischlein,  
Wärmt das Köpfchen in der Sonne,  
Plätschert lustig mit dem Schwänzchen.

Doch die Möwe, aus den Lüften,  
Schießt herunter auf das Fischlein,  
Und den raschen Raub im Schnabel,  
Schwingt sie sich hinauf ins Blaue.

### Peace at sea

Peace at sea! In tranquil splendor  
Shines the sun upon the water,  
And through undulating jewels  
Plows the ship in emerald furrows.

By the rudder lies the steersman  
On his belly, lightly snoring;  
By the mast the tarry ship's boy  
Squats while patching up the canvas.

Underneath the dirt it reddens  
On his cheek, and sorrow quivers  
Round his big, broad mouth and sadly  
Shine his great eyes, wide and lovely.

For the captain stands before him,  
Storms and swears and scolds the culprit:  
"Rascal, you have stolen a herring  
From my barrel, thieving rascal!"

Peace at sea! Above the water  
Leaps a crafty little sea-fish,  
Warms his body in the sunlight,  
Splashes with his tail-fin gayly.

Now a seagull from the breezes  
Swoops upon the little sea-fish;  
In his beak the squirming plunder  
Wings upon a voyage to heaven.