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## DOCUMENT A

### The Sea is History (a poem by Derek Walcott)

Where are your monuments, your battles, martyrs?  
 Where is your tribal memory? Sirs,  
 in that grey vault. The sea. The sea  
 has locked them up. The sea is History.

5 First, there was the heaving oil,  
 heavy as chaos;  
 then, like a light at the end of a tunnel,

the lantern of a caravel,  
 and that was Genesis.

10 Then there were the packed cries,  
 the shit, the moaning:

Exodus.  
 Bone soldered by coral to bone,  
 mosaics

15 mantled by the benediction of the shark's shadow,

that was the Ark of the Covenant.  
 Then came from the plucked wires  
 of sunlight on the sea floor

20 the plangent harps of the Babylonian bondage,  
 as the white cowries clustered like manacles  
 on the drowned women,

and those were the ivory bracelets  
 of the Song of Solomon,  
 but the ocean kept turning blank pages

25 looking for History.  
 Then came the men with eyes heavy as anchors  
 who sank without tombs,

30 brigands who barbecued cattle,  
 leaving their charred ribs like palm leaves on the shore,  
 then the foaming, rabid maw

of the tidal wave swallowing Port Royal,  
 and that was Jonah,  
 but where is your Renaissance?

Sir, it is locked in them sea-sands

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35 out there past the reef's moiling shelf,  
where the men-o'-war floated down;  
  
strop on these goggles, I'll guide you there myself.  
It's all subtle and submarine,  
through colonnades of coral,

40 past the gothic windows of sea-fans  
to where the crusty grouper, onyx-eyed,  
blinks, weighted by its jewels, like a bald queen;  
  
and these groined caves with barnacles  
pitted like stone  
45 are our cathedrals,  
  
and the furnace before the hurricanes:  
Gomorrah. Bones ground by windmills  
into marl and cornmeal,  
  
and that was Lamentations—  
50 that was just Lamentations,  
it was not History;  
  
then came, like scum on the river's drying lip,  
the brown reeds of villages  
mantling and congealing into towns,

55 and at evening, the midges' choirs,  
and above them, the spires  
lancing the side of God  
  
as His son set, and that was the New Testament.

Then came the white sisters clapping  
60 to the waves' progress,  
and that was Emancipation—  
  
jubilation, O jubilation—  
vanishing swiftly  
as the sea's lace dries in the sun,

65 but that was not History,  
that was only faith,  
and then each rock broke into its own nation;  
  
then came the synod of flies,  
then came the secretarial heron,  
70 then came the bullfrog bellowing for a vote,  
  
fireflies with bright ideas  
and bats like jetting ambassadors  
and the mantis, like khaki police,

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75 and the furred caterpillars of judges  
examining each case closely,  
and then in the dark ears of ferns

and in the salt chuckle of rocks  
with their sea pools, there was the sound  
like a rumour without any echo

80 of History, really beginning.

**in *The Star-Apple Kingdom* (1979), Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York,  
repr. in *Selected Poems* by Derek Walcott, 2007.**

## DOCUMENT B

The *essential* Chichester achievement is something more personal – and personal not alone to him, but embedded in the hearts of every one of us. He has succeeded in making dreams come true, his own private dreams, and the dreams that most men have from time to time as they fare on that “long fool’s errand to the grave”.  
5 For 99.999 (recurring) per cent of mankind, dreams remain locked up in the secret compartments of the soul. Not for Chichester. For him, to dream is to determine, and to determine, to achieve. People will say, “Oh yes, but he has been lucky. He has made money, he has found rich backers. He does not have to travel daily on the 8.15.” But surely this is part of the achievement! No one *has* to travel daily on  
10 the 8.15. We get caught in the ruts of life because we let ourselves get caught. It may be a good thing for the social organisation of the world that we do – a community of Chichesters would be impossible. But the individual who refuses to accept those ruts is good for all of us. And Chichester is that individual carried to the *nth* degree. Not once, but several times in his life, he has set himself some  
15 task of incredible skill and endurance in the air and at sea, and then not rested until he has brought it off – or, as with the flying accident that ended his first attempt to circumnavigate the world, been brought to a halt by events that not even he can control. Even that flying accident, final as it would have been for most men, for him brought only temporary failure. He took out that dream thirty-five  
20 years later, adapted it to sailing instead of flying, and made it come true. This is the Chichester we salute. He has lived not alone his own dreams, but ours, too.

Chichester landed at Plymouth late on Sunday evening, May 28, expecting to sail on to London in a day or two. After his great reception by the Lord Mayor and people of Plymouth, two other historic events awaited him in London – the  
25 accolade of knighthood to be conferred on him by Her Majesty the Queen with the very sword given by Queen Elizabeth I to Sir Francis Drake after that first circumnavigation of the world by sail close on four centuries ago, and a luncheon at the Mansion House given in his honour by the Lord Mayor of London. Provisional dates for these occasions were arranged while Chichester was still at sea; they  
30 were to take place early in June.

It needs little reading between the lines of Chichester’s factual narrative to understand something of the physical ordeal he sustained on his voyage. With a courage and self-discipline that defy description he drove himself to the limits of  
35 human endurance. And he had to pay. A week after landing at Plymouth he collapsed with a duodenal ulcer, and he spent the next month in the Royal Naval Hospital there. Being Chichester, and with his voyage to his starting point on the Thames in London still unfinished, he was on his feet again quickly. At the beginning of July he sailed *Gipsy Moth IV* to London, accompanied by Sheila and Giles Chichester, and his friend Commander Erroll Bruce, RN.

40 On July 7, 1967, the Queen received Chichester at Greenwich, and knighted him with Drake’s sword in public, in the Grand Quadrangle of the Royal Naval College. Nearby, in her permanent berth at Greenwich, *Cutty Sark*, among the most famous of the clippers whose way Chichester had followed round the world, was dressed overall for the occasion.

45 After the Queen had visited *Gipsy Moth IV* at Greenwich, Chichester sailed on to Tower Pier, where he was met by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of London, Sir Robert and Lady Bellinger. Then followed a drive through the City to the Mansion House, a triumphal procession rather, in which the people of London took Chichester to their heart. He and his *Gipsy Moth IV* had done their job – the  
50 smallest wool clipper ever to leave Australia, sailed by the smallest crew, had

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faithfully delivered her token cargo of miniature bales of wool across the world.

Chichester cannot write this epilogue, because he could not see himself as the crowd of cheering Londoners saw him. I did. Slight (until you caught a glimpse of the muscle in wrist and forearm), weatherbeaten, wearing thick glasses, 55 Chichester gave himself no airs, and when he acknowledged the Lord Mayor's address of welcome, the crowd's cheers, he spoke more of Sheila his wife and Giles his son than of himself. He was the nation's hero, but to me he seemed to epitomize not scarlet and lace, but that incredible endurance that the people of England have shown when it was needed of them, the endurance of the men who 60 sailed with Drake, Anson, Cook and Nelson, for England. And that, I think, is what everybody felt. And that is why we cheered.

**Francis Chichester, "An Epilogue", by J. R. L. Anderson, in *Gipsy Moth Circles the World*, 1967, International Marine (The McGraw-Hill Cies), pages 220-222.**

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DOCUMENT C



Colour poster of the maiden voyage of the *Titanic* – 1912  
(33" x 23" – 85 x 59 cm) / White Star Line Collection