The Maldive Shark

By Herman Melville

About the Shark, phlegmatical one,
   Pale sot of the Maldive sea,
   The sleek little pilot-fish, azure and slim,
   How alert in attendance be.
   From his saw-pit of mouth, from his charnel of maw
   They have nothing of harm to dread,
   But liquidly glide on his ghastly flank
   Or before his Gorgonian head;
   Or lurk in the port of serrated teeth
   In white triple tiers of glittering gates,
   And there find a haven when peril’s abroad,
   An asylum in jaws of the Fates!
   They are friends; and friendly they guide him to prey,
   Yet never partake of the treat—
   Eyes and brains to the dotard lethargic and dull,
   Pale ravener of horrible meat.

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