

# 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.

n/a



Although chiefly known for his magisterial novel *Moby-Dick* and for other prose works, Herman Melville was also a fascinating poet who turned to the art after his serious fiction failed to find appreciative readers. His eccentric verse displays the complexity of thought and verbal richness of his novels, which has led some critics to rank him just below Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson among 19th-century American poets.

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