THE SEA SLUG COCKTAIL

David Higgins and others http://www.myspace.com/aaronpao/blog/75347263

This poem is a nautical rendition of the Robert Service poem "Ballad of the Ice Worm Cocktail". I first heard it in 1982 while circumnavigating on board the Schooner Deliverance. My understanding is that it was written by Wayne Chimenti (chief mate), Dan Quin (bosun) and Dave Higgins (master and owner of Deliverance). Thus the names in the poem. I suspect it has been handed down from "schooner boy" to schooner boy" for the past 25 years and its origin forgotten.

-- Ken Potter, former engineer, Schooner Deliverance

Down the dock with a swaggering walk, came another salty lad A hollow fid was in his hand, a sextant in his bag. From the placid Caribbean where he'd made himself a name, He'd come to join the big-rigs, and sail the bounding main.

Of spinnakers and bloopers, and cunninghams and such, He could tell you A to Z, he seemed to know as much As all those red-pants yachties, who'll tell you the storms they've fought While sailing 'round the sound, in boats of frozen snot.

But he claimed to know the gaffers, he could tell you throat from peak, He'd brought along his Ashley's and smeared tar upon his cheek, And the moment he stepped aboard that big-rigged salt stained deck, His eagerness to take the helm was barely held in check.

Now Wayne the mate was forward, and Dan the bosun, too, Just sittin' in the rum-sharks lounge, and knockin' back a brew "Now I don't know," said Wayno the mate, "about our newest hand. He claims to be a schooner boy, but his boots are full of sand.

He steps aboard and spins a yarn of all the rigs he's known, But let's see him in the widow-maker, when the hawse is full of foam. Let's send him aloft on a stormy night, with his belly full of supper, And have him hand the tops'l while there's fishes in the scupper."

"I agree," said bosun Dan, "and so I have a plan With which tonight we'll prove, the mettle of this man. You meet me here in the rum-sharks lounge, and though our ways be rude, We'll make a proper schooner boy, of this inland waters dude."

So that night in the focs'l they assembled all the gang. The fun was fast and furious and loud the hooch-bird sang. Amidst the din of shanties, and the strumming of guitars, In walked the new recruit, the jaunty would-be tar. A yachting cap was on his head, top-siders on his feet, But the boys all rose to greet him, and offered him a seat. "To the brotherhood before the mast we welcome you!" they roared "We knew that you were one of us the moment you stepped aboard."

"And so," said bosun Dan, to the blushing new deckhand,
"We've assembled the elite of the schooner fleet and they here before you stand,
And just one thing would make them smile, one thing would bring them joy,
And that's to see you, honored, sir, a bonified schooner boy.

Now the same some say is one who's sailed through a roaring water-spout, But most genuine authorities, this definition doubt, And it is the notion of this assemblage of renown

That a schooner boy is one who drinks a sea-slug cocktail down."

A puzzled look crossed the new man's brow, "I trust you do not tease. A cocktail I'm familiar with, but what's this sea-slug please?"
"We're not surprised," said Wayne the mate, "this slug you do not know,
For they cling to the keels of deepwater ships, in the seas where the big-rigs go.

They're soft and fat and pasty white, and feed upon red-lead, And bottom slime and barnacles, and shit that's pumped from the head." "A toughish yarn," the new man laughed, "as well you may admit, But I'd like to see this little beast, before I swallow it."

"Tis easy done," cried bosun Dan. "Ho cookie, haste and bring Bring forth some pickled sea-slugs, of the vintage of last spring." So the cook went to the galley and in the reefer found, A jar of slimy sea-slugs, in sperm-whale's vomit drowned.

She mixed the critters up in a shaker of squid secretion And handed it over to Wayno and Dan, who drank down the creation. The would-be schooner boy turned green, his face a ghostly pale He bounded from the forepeak, and headed for the rail.

And there he pumped his bilges while the schooner boys made jest Though if you've read your Service, undoubtedly you've guessed The sea-slugs in those cocktails, of such formidable size Were just chunks of macaroni, with red ink dots for eyes.

But if you were a schooner boy, you'd know it was no sham, Those were bonified sea-slugs, no sweat for Wayno and Dan, For a schooner boy is forged in hell, he knows not little pains His stomach's lined with iron, there's salt water in his veins.