

Ship to shore

He calls her from *Tranquility*
from the engine room, exasperating man he is:
at least, that's what it sounds like.

She keeps saying *I cannae hear ye*
- '*Tranquility*', aye, but the rest is
droned oot. Call me back.

He calls her back,
just the same.

Oh, she knows how privacy
on a thing that size
is hard to find. But honestly: it's just
noise. He could be saying anything.

And what does he need to say now
that won't keep till he's home again?

Though even then, when she thinks about it,
it's like he needs the telly roaring, or the washing-machine
before he'll speak.

She used to think he was fearless,
out there in all conditions

and he is maybe, except for this
one thing:

the sound of his own voice, saying
- what, she can't be certain,
but it might have been *I luve ye*.

Judith Taylor