

The Five Pilots Poem  
Amy Griffin

1

The wind sang high on a rocky coast,  
To the dance of a reckless tide,  
As a vessel strayed on it's onward way,  
With no pilot on board to guide,  
Till from landwards upon it's stormy course,  
Some kindly eyes were bent,  
And forth undismayed to the strangers aid,  
Five dauntless pilots went.

2

There is one who has thrown his spade away,  
As he ran to the waters side,  
And another but three shot months before,  
Has welcomed his youthful bride,  
But the spade may lie on the garden ridges,  
And the young wife may watch in vain,  
For God's decree from chilly seas,  
They shall never come back again.

3

No wistful farewell those doomed men took,  
As the pulled from their native shore,  
They were summoned away from their bright fireside,  
As many a time before.  
That watery track, they had traversed oft,  
The waves were like old friends now,  
One might fancy they knew that staunch canoe,  
As they leaped round their gallant brow.

4

They are gone away and away to death,  
They pull with a hearty will,  
While the watchers moved on an eager group,  
To the top of Dun Dalhan Hill.  
They see the pilots near the ship  
The sea gives one fatal roll  
And they cry to the love of God above  
Have pity on their creatures soul.

5

But now the moment of direst need,  
For that need will soon be past,  
It is in vain to wrestle in death's embrace,  
As its cold hand has gripped them fast.  
Ah, Life is sweet to the darkening eye,  
And the sea makes a lonely grave  
And no human power in that awful hour,  
Even one precious life could save.

6

There are three gone now and the other twain,  
Are struggling right bravely yet,  
With their manly brows to the heavens laid bare,  
And their teeth in anguish set,  
Each meets the wave with his warm breast  
And strikes through the blinding foam,  
For the love of life, For the love of wife  
For the love of a cherished home

7

There is one left now and his dwelling lies,  
Low down on the rugged shore,  
For he knows that two tiny lads are there,  
At sport round his cabin door.  
In the strength of his noble manhood's prime,  
With hope of the future high.  
With life so bright and the land in sight  
He will not, he cannot die.

8

It is o'er the struggle was dire but brief  
The last of the five are gone,  
Those gallant men, who for other lives,  
Were ready to risk their own,  
We do not bid you along farewell,  
We will meet in some future day,  
For the crimson flood of our saviour's blood  
Washes the world's sins away.

About the Author: Amy Griffin.

Amy Griffin was born in Ennis, County Clare in 1855. In her early years she lived between Dublin and Kilbaha, County Clare. She was married to Dr. John Griffin of Kilkee County Clare.

Amy kept diaries detailing her life in Dublin and Kilbaha.

Two of her better known works in West Clare are poems *The Five Pilots Poem*. Detailing a disaster in May 1873 when five men drowned off Kilbaha while attempting to put a pilot on board an Austrian brig called the *Nico*, and *The Grave of the Yellow Men*, a poem about eleven bodies washed up near Kilbaha in the 1800's and to date no one knows where they came from.