

## ***EVERYTHING BEGINS NOTHING ENDS***

Dear Lord our God,  
I beg you, you the greatest giver,  
Who grants and bestows,  
The good I seek for all men,  
Merciful and most holy,  
Spare us the worries and misery  
Along the course we steadfastly stay  
From the day we set sail.

*Excerpt from the poem, From Mascate to Mokha, by Sa'îd Ibn Sâlim Bâtâyi' (16th century)*

Everything begins nothing ends  
first the Niobe and then the Rainbow  
this is the entire Canadian navy  
and not enough sailors

and in nineteen fourteen  
a first contingent  
sets sail from Quebec, the sailors  
heading for Jutland, fighting the Germans  
alongside the British

the Cenobe suffers its first losses  
in Kerno, the Canucks serve  
under Jellicoe and Beatty  
at the battle of Dogger Bank  
taking part in the evacuation of Dunkirk  
then the U-501 sank, hit by Canadian grenades,  
followed by twenty-nine more enemy subs

they take part in the Murmansk convoys  
support the D-Day landings  
serve proudly in theatres in Greece, the Aleutian Islands,  
Sicily and Italy, in Hong Kong  
during the Korean War at Chinnampo  
despite supply problems

during the Cold War, they travel the world  
participate in a hundred operations  
striving to assist and help keep the peace,  
acting with bravery at all times

stirring leitmotiv of wandering seafarers  
who serve duty day and night

despite the tremendous demands of some  
the indifference of others

they patrol the Arctic  
following in the steps of Joseph-Elzéar Bernier  
firmly claiming what belongs to the country  
protecting the coasts from traffickers and smugglers

in the Gulf War they back up the troops  
support the Kosovo campaign  
they serve in Somalia, in the Adriatic, in East Timor  
wherever duty calls around the world

over and beyond the passage of time and the coastlines  
where the boundless sea begins and land ends,  
they are undaunted by the immensity of the ocean  
and the endless tides  
the ship's bow coursing through the foam  
amid whirls of light.

*Translation of the poem commemorating the Centennial of the Canadian Marine, written by Pierre DesRuisseaux, Parliamentary Poet Laureate, on a poetic mission on the frigate Montréal, in the Atlantic, October 2009*