

This piece has been rejected SEVEN TIMES out of the seven times that I have submitted it. Most recently on 17 June 2026. Since then, I have been playing with the following ideas.

*This is **The Original**, in which “he” wants a shirt and “I” (first person singular) make it.*

Minimalism for an Outdoor Lifestyle

He said he owns only three things:
a pure wool blanket, a red keep cup,
and a tiny, plastic Christmas tree.

The blanket he won in a bet
on the outcome of the last Federal election.
He has the blanket but doesn't feel like a winner.

The keep cup he discovered one morning
full of hot black coffee, with a twenty dollar note
neatly folded and tucked into the white silicon band.

The Christmas tree was formerly
a car air-freshener, now retired from service
and discarded into the street.

He told me he would like a new shirt:
a particular shirt, a pirate shirt, a large, roomy, blousy
shirt like the Hollywood swashbucklers wore.

He absently stroked his buccaneer beard.
“In a shirt like that,” he said, “with flouncy sleeves and ruffles
down the chest and a thin string tie at the throat...”

“I could sail away, see the world, experience the exhilaration of nautical adventuring, fulfill a dream or two, wish on a different star, make friends with a whale, or an albatross.”

I took great care making this shirt, this particular shirt, this pirate shirt. I chose the best cloth, sewed my best stitches, embroidered a skull and crossbones on the breast.

It had flouncy sleeves, and ruffles down the chest, and a thin string tie at the throat. It was a large, roomy, blousy shirt like the Hollywood swashbucklers wore.

I pressed and folded my work, wrapped it in a piece of cool black satin, placed it inside a carved wooden box, and left it under the tiny, plastic Christmas tree.

New Edited Version 1, in which “he” still wants a shirt but doesn’t get it. He is left waiting, wanting and wishing for a new star. (Note: I thought it might benefit from a different title, even though I really like the original.)

Waiting for His Ship

He said he owns only three things:
a pure wool blanket, a red keep cup,
and a tiny, plastic Christmas tree.

The blanket he won in a bet
on the outcome of the last Federal election.
He has the blanket but doesn’t feel like a winner.

The keep cup he discovered one morning
full of hot black coffee, with a twenty dollar note
neatly folded and tucked into the white silicon band.

The Christmas tree was formerly
a car air-freshener, now retired from service
and discarded into the street.

He absently stroked his buccaneer beard,
told me he would like a new shirt, a pirate shirt,
like the Hollywood swashbucklers wore.

“In a shirt like that,” he said, “I could sail away,
see the world, make friends with a whale,
or an albatross, wish on a different star.”

***New Edited Version 2**, in which “he” still wants a shirt but this time “she” (third person feminine singular) makes it for him. (Note: I brought back the original title for the first part and added yet another title for the second part. This third title is supposed to evoke the song and perhaps lead the reader into the lyric “She once was a true love of mine.”)*

Waiting for His Ship

I Minimalism for an Outdoor Lifestyle

He said he owns only three things:
a pure wool blanket, a red keep cup,
and a tiny, plastic Christmas tree.

The blanket he won in a bet
on the outcome of the last Federal election.
He has the blanket but doesn't feel like a winner.

The keep cup he discovered one morning
full of hot black coffee, with a twenty dollar note
neatly folded and tucked into the white silicon band.

The Christmas tree was formerly
a car air-freshener, now retired from service
and discarded into the street.

II *Tell her to make me Cambric shirt**

He absently stroked his buccaneer beard,
asked her to make him a particular shirt, a pirate shirt
like the Hollywood swashbucklers wore.

"In a shirt like that," he said, "I could sail away,
see the world, make friends with a whale,
or an albatross, wish on a different star."

She took great care making his shirt, his particular shirt,
chose the softest cloth, sewed her finest stitches,
embroidered a skull and crossbones on the breast.

She pressed it, folded it, wrapped it in a piece of cool
black satin, placed it inside a carved wooden box,
and left it under a tiny, plastic Christmas tree.

**Lyric from Scarborough Fair (Simon & Garfunkle)*