

Soundings

Sam Clemens borrowed his *nom de plume*
from a boatsman's measuring cry,
"Mark twain," two fathoms depth - quite enough
to keep a stern wheeler free from chaos.

What are the markings of our voyages?
What leadsman navigates our ways
through perilous rocks and shallows
of feckless greed and foolish delusion?

The captain waits uneasy at his station
then above the engine's churning,
a voice from the deck cries out, "mark twain"
and he nudges the throttle forward.

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