

Diesel Oil Smell

Buck Conrad

These ships are now black, they were all gray, and that diesel oil smell it got worse every day.

These ships and their crews worked together as one and saved our country from the rising sun.
They ran over the oceans and under them too, and never a gripe or a whimper heard you.

The men of these ships were all tried and true and oh yes, these are boats not ships, to you.
Salt water makes them shine with a glimmer and sheen these boats are called a Diesel Submarine.

When WWII was over and through, the Cold War started and Korea too.
Our men in the boats never missed a beat; they reworked the damned things, now that was a feat.

They changed the sails, the shears and all; they put snorkels in her to make her look tall.
They increased her speed both on top and below and put new, young men in her to handle the show.

She traveled far, she traveled wide and she listened and she saw,
then on her return she reported it back to the Navy Ops Bureau and all.
Why, we'd be gone three months at a whack, and low and behold all of a sudden we're back.

None dare ask where we'd been or had seen, for top secrets the word and from us you'll not glean,
one bit of information, nor a word, nor a sign and thanks to all and the new subs design.

But through all of this you could not erase the smell of that damned diesel oil in your face.
It was always there even though you scrubbed and never went away no matter how hard you rubbed.

Then a fresh wind came blowing in and things began a changing.
A new type of power did increase the subs size and also her worldly rangings.
With Nuclear Power and ICBMs, the future for Diesels was beginning to dim.

By the year of 1975, there was hardly a diesel afloat.
She'd given way to nuclear power and now the Navy could gloat.
We've got a true submersible here, she's long, powerful and black
and if it weren't for the men in her, she never would come back.

But us old timers still think of days, when we in the boats then were young,
when we launched our torpedos, fired our guns and escaped with the Momsen lung.
When everything we owned smelled of Diesel, the smell of the submarine sailor
and every 6 months we bought new dress blues especially made by a tailor.

How we always looked sharp in our new jumpers of blue and those tight pants with a bell,
but you could tell what kind of ships we were from because of that diesel oil smell.
So here's to the old time sub sailor, I raise my glass to you.
I toast your honor and courage and yes, that diesel smell too

The Diesel Boat served her purpose; her time has drawn nigh.
To our shipmates who have gone before us and now dwell with the Lord on high,
it's for you I write this poem and I'll finish with a sigh, as soon as I make this last request just before I die.

This last request of the good Lord I make and it's for all in Heaven's sake,
Please dear Lord, oh please hear me well, can't we get rid of that Diesel Oil Smell?