FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Body, Mind & Spirit

Ultimate Voyage: A Book of Five Mariners
William Gilkerson
Shambhala Publications
978-1-57062-364-6
(May 31, 1998)

Sailor, painter, journalist, historian, adventurer and author of ten non-fictional nautical works, William Gilkerson brings together his many talents and knowledge in this altogether satisfying seafaring tale. Ultimate Voyage combines romance and adventure of the sea with profound revelations into human nature. Gilkerson's intimate and thorough knowledge of boats and sea remind one of Herman Melville's Moby Dick, bringing to life that arcane world even to the most modern desert or city dweller.

Allegorically placed and timed, five male infants were born on the same Renaissance day in an old world port city. As was the tradition, when eight years of age, the boys were enrolled in the training. "While their families spanned the scale of society, the training united them in an egalitarian form of apprenticeship that assured the port of an ongoing source of skilled people to build and man the ships of the next generation." Within the training, officers sorted themselves ship handlers from sail handlers, navigators from cooks. Yet everyone received a taste of what problems everybody else worked with so all trainees were able to see where their own service fit into a broader view. The boys' common birthday bonded them to solemnly agree to be friends for life, to one day have their own ship, and to sail it to every place where no one had sailed before. They also fixed their roles and from these, derived their names for one another - Bosun, Flags, Pilot, Steward and Crew. One day as youths, the five attend a fair day at the summer market and encounter a gypsy oracle. "One is five and five are one, land and sea, sky, wind and sun." She goes on to recite a quatrain for each. Although they don't realize it at the time, the quatrains hold the key to the initiatory test each young man will face on their voyage on their ship, the Alembic. No one higher than another, each is tested to his limit, while the others in turn entrust their lives to another's skills and insights.

Gilkerson's message is clear, we are one and interdependent on each other for both outer and inner accomplishments. Richly satisfying in maritime descriptions, in-depth multi-faceted

personalities and philosophical twists and insights, this tale set an extraordinary standard for spiritual fiction. Ink drawings accompany the work.

Sophia Tarila