



Illustration by E. R. Wicklund.

# *The Lighthouse*

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1849  
(possibly inspired by the Portland Head Light in Maine)

*The rocky ledge runs far into the sea,  
And on its outer point, some miles away,  
The Lighthouse lifts its massive masonry,  
A pillar of fire by night, of cloud by day.*

\* \* \*

*And as the evening darkens, lo! how bright,  
Through the deep purple of the twilight air,  
Beams forth the sudden radiance of its light  
With strange, unearthly splendor in the glare!*

*Not one alone; from each projecting cape  
And perilous reef along the ocean's verge,  
Starts into life a dim gigantic shape,  
Holding its lantern o'er the restless surge.*

\* \* \*

*The sea-bird wheeling round it, with the din  
Of wings and winds and solitary cries,  
Blinded and maddened by the light within,  
Dashes himself against the glare, and dies.*

*A new Prometheus, chained upon the rock,  
Still grasping in his hand the fire of Jove,  
It does not hear the cry, nor heed the shock,  
But hails the mariner with words of love.*

*"Sail on!" it says, "sail on, ye stately ships!  
And with your floating bridge the ocean span;  
Be mine to guard this light from all eclipse,  
Be yours to bring man nearer unto man!"*