

Listen, my children, and you shall hear  
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,  
On the eighteenth of April, in  
Seventy-Five: Hardly a man is now alive  
Who remembers that famous day and year.  
Then he climbed to  
the tower of the church,  
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,  
To the belfry-chamber overhead,  
And startled the pigeons from their perch  
On the sombre rafters, that round him made  
Masses and moving  
shapes of shade,— By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,  
To the highest window in the wall,  
Where he paused to listen and look down  
A moment on the roofs of the town,  
And the moonlight flowing over  
all. and with muffled oar  
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,  
Just as the moon rose over the bay,  
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay  
The Somerset, British man-of-war:  
A phantom ship, with each  
mast and spar  
Across the moon, like a prison-bar,  
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified  
By its own  
reflection in the tide. Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street  
Wanders and watches with eager  
ears,  
Till in the silence around him he hears  
The muster of men at the barrack door,  
The sound of arms,  
and the tramp of feet,  
And the measured tread of the grenadiers  
Marching down to their boats on the  
shore. He said to his friend, "If the British march  
By land or sea from the town to-night,  
Hang a lantern  
aloft in the belfry-arch  
Of the North-Church-tower, as a signal-light,—  
One if by land, and two if by sea;  
And I on the opposite shore will be,  
Ready to ride and spread the alarm  
Through every Middlesex village  
and farm,  
For the country-folk to be up and to arm." Then he said "Good night!"