

Decompression sickness & Barotrauma
by Clarence Khoo
adapted from Lord Alfred Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade"

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league under.
Deep in the murky depths
Dove the physiologist.
Exhale as you rise,
Ascend gradually, they insist.
Up from the murky depths rose the physiologist.

Gradually one must ascend
Else he risks his internal organs rend?
Sadly, the physiologist had not remembered this.
His not to make reply,
His not to reason why,
His but to cram or die.
Up from the murky depths rose the physiologist.

Nitrogen in the right of him! Nitrogen in the left of him!
Nitrogen within him,
Bubbled and fizzed.
Writhing from the agony he faced,
Boldly he rose with haste.
Into the jaws of death,
Into the mouth of Tatarus' waste
Rose the physiologist.

Pain in his chest did flare,
Pain caused by the trapped air.
Dyspnea and cough was there,
Rising too quickly while stricken with paralysis.
Blinded by visual smoke,
Not exhaling meant his alveoli broke.
Air embolism resulted in cerebral stroke,
Rising from the abyss.
Then he failed to rise further,
All that was left, left of the physiologist.

Of what other dangers should this poem consist?
O', there are too many in my notes to list
To beleaguer the poor physiologist!
Learn from the mistakes he made,
Learn from the price he paid!
Noble physiologist!