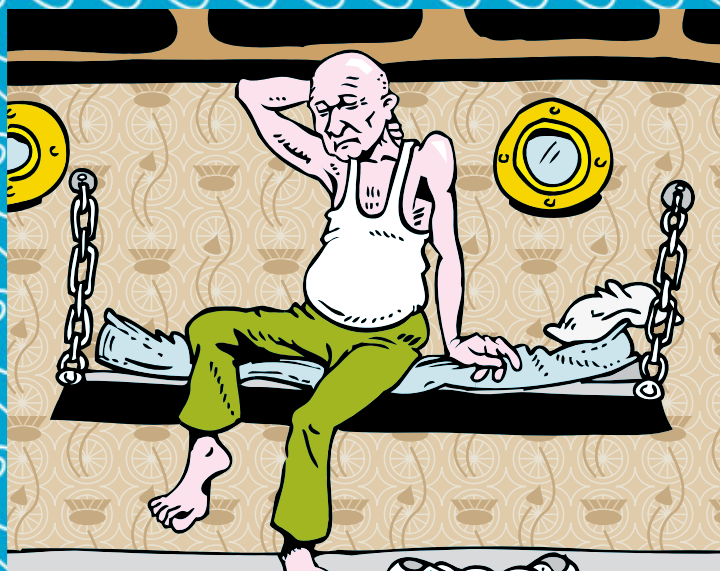


## Text 2



The old man woke to another day, another dawn, as he had for more years than he cared to remember.

Again, he had dreamed. Dreams full of torment and agony. Once they were terrifying nightmares but time had dulled their impact. They would never go. They plagued his few, restless sleeping hours and haunted his long waking hours. But he no longer woke up screaming and trembling, and covered in cold sweat.

A small, empty, brown medicine bottle rolling back and forth across the wooden floor had roused him from his restless sleep and his fitful dreams.

He would never be free of them. Dreams, memories, nightmares, visions and hallucinations lurked in the dark corners of his mind, searching for an opportunity to escape—but never escaping. He carried them as a wandering minstrel carries his sad songs.

No longer did he think of the days of his youth. Those days were long gone. What lay ahead might be even longer. There was no escape for the damned. And he was one of the damned—condemned by his own actions.

First light. He climbed from his crude, rickety bunk and rubbed his neck as if he had been sleeping in an uncomfortable position. He could feel the rough line of hard flesh: an ancient wound that had healed yet still caused him pain.

Looking across the bay he could sense that the tide was running free. Yet, as free as the tide might seem to be, it too was locked into an eternal journey, a journey that never really went anywhere.

He was locked into his own endless journey—an impossible journey to escape his haunting ancient memories.

Dawn was breaking across the shadowy waters and he must be off.

*Alan Horsfield*