

SNAILS

**CHARLES
HARPER WEBB**

They glide out on morning's bay:
banded brown-and-yellow ships,
each riding its own fleshy wave.
Bend close, and you can hear mates

bellow, "Fizzen the mainstump!
Bedaff the grob! Put yer backs
into it, ya blungy sidesores!"
Hornpipes scree. Sailors' feet

slam oaken decks. Ant-sized
lookouts bawl, "Darcy blows!"
If I've slept well, and have nowhere
else to go, sometimes I'll shrink

and climb on board.
I'm the Captain, naturally—
sovereign-sent to find new
worlds, and found new colonies.

My men are scared, but place
their faith in me to steer us
out across the vast driveway,
our ship dragging its silver wake

from the land of agapanthus
and ice plant toward fabled
Rosegar-Den. There, flowers
huge as human heads spritz

perfume and cheer, waving
their pink, red, and gold petals
with pride, as—for us alone—
their harbor opens wide.