

BRUCE TELOPA

New Communion, 2014
Oil on Canvas, 30 x 42 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

WALLACE BAINÉ

Voyage of the Rodrigos

The following is excerpted from the recently discovered notebook of Esteban Quiñones de Cuervo, seaman on board the vessel Santa Maria de la Inmaculada Concepcion, under the command of Admiral Don Christopher Columbus, summer/fall 1492.

September 28, 1492

Okay, so no time to compose love sonnets here. Once Columbus figures out that I stole this paper and quill from his quarters while he was up on deck telling another one of his idiotic lies to keep the crew from tearing him to pieces, I'll almost certainly be hung from the main mast and thrown naked to the sharks.

Of course, the "Grand Admiral of the Ocean Sea," as he likes to be called, doesn't strike me as the quickest dung beetle to the cow patty. If he doesn't bust me, then one of these yard goons he's hired as a crew probably will. Once I'm seen in possession of paper, I'm sure they'll beat me senseless so they'll have something to wipe across their hairy arses other than the one piece of burlap everyone's been sharing since we left the Canary Islands.

I don't know, maybe I'm overestimating this bunch. So far, they've really been nothing but a bunch of bedwetters and crybabies. Twenty-two days out of La Gomera island, and they're ready to mutiny just to go back home? Twenty-two days? We're just getting started!

Every time the wind goes flat for a bit, they start wailing and carrying on like a bunch of little girls. We're sailing west to the Orient, for God's sake. What the hell did these guys expect, we'd be back by supper time? Considering the caliber of these losers, maybe we should switch names with the Niña. It would fit us better.

Seriously, I thought this would be a pretty rugged crew. We're doing what no one has ever done before, and it's probably a goddamned suicide mission. I figured I'd finally get to sail with some real sailors, men who would think an agonizing death by sea would be a fair trade for a great adventure. Instead, I get this lot, a bunch of moaners and tremblers constantly bitching about the captain.

For the record, I don't have a lot of confidence in the Big Salami either. I wouldn't bet he could navigate his way across a chamber pot, but he hasn't killed us yet.