

Mercaptans

With apologies to Walt Whitman

O Captain, Mercaptan! Your essence overwhelms.
No other odors are so strong in olfactory realms;
They overpower the pleasant scents we're capable of smelling,
And numb our nasal acumen because they're so compelling.

*O gross, gross, gross,
O nauseating stuff!
Where R-SH'es are involved
A little's quite enough.*

O Captain, Mercaptan, the smell of death is yours.
Your thioalcoholic breath is one that long endures.
The skunk that sprays a mile away confirms the diagnosis
A single whiff removes all doubt of morbid halitosis .

*O Captain, Mercaptan,
Your fetid odors reek;
What nasty nasal nightmares
Their noxious stench pique.*

O Captain, Mercaptan, rise up and waft the smell
Of coffee brewing in the pot that people love so well;
Or stabilize the fragrance of a perfumer's creation,
And let such lovely incenses redeem your reputation.

*But mercaptans do not answer
When such odes as this are read;
They are simply sulfur compounds
And they're very very dead.*

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