

Klaus Stortebeker 1360 – 1401

A giant of a pirate helping the Swedes fight off the Danes,
working with the Victual Brothers, stealing ships, and avoiding the chains.
A band of Robin Hoods, pirates with a heart,
stealing from the rich, giving to the poor a la carte.

Such a leader Klaus became, what a male!
sometimes single gulping a container of 4 liters of ale.
His band set up a stronghold; Too strong to be defeated,
but he and his 73 buddy pirates were captured; someone cheated.

In Hamburg, tried and convicted, after offering bribes,
the outcome was dire and contained deadly vibes.
All were to be executed, beheaded, for sure.
for that punishment, there is no cure.

Klaus, always the brave one, offers himself headfirst.
Take me but spare my comrades that I walk past after I am dispersed.
The judge agrees and Klaus' head is dispatched.
Rising up and walking along the line of his men with head not attached.

Passing one, two, three, they shouted with glee,
Four, Five, Six, they were happy to agree.
Seven, Eight, Nine, Looking fine,
Ten, Eleven, Twelve men passed; a good sign.

Setting out for another, the executioner tripped the headless Klaus.
He stayed down succumbing in the courthouse.
The Court reneged and beheaded all 73 of his pirates.
Klaus has a statue in Hamburg probably surrounded by their spirits.

Later archives claim that he lived, paying taxes in 1418.
Alas, who knows from what truths myths can glean?