Rime of the Ancient Buccaneer

There is an ancient Buccaneer
Who stops one student with a ROV
"By your long gray beard and black patched eye
What, grizzled pirate, do you want from me?

The Kennedy Space Center doors are open wide
And my team waits for me to come in
Object Retrieval begins at 1:00
To be late would be a sin."

But still he holds the participant with his skinny hand--
"There was once a pirate ship
Whose haul was so laden with pilfered treasure,
To the starboard side, she began to tip.

Emeralds, rubies, and earrings of gold
Spilled from their chests in the hold
Much too heavy was our load
So the chieftain commanded the men
'Toss 500 kilograms of loot
Into the deep ocean.'

'What??' Said I,' throw away our hard-sought riches?'
Spanish wine, silver swords--what a loss!
Ferocious greed seized my heart
With my pistol, I shot the good pirate boss."

"I fear you, ancient Buccaneer,
With your aged body and flabby paunch,
I must get to the contest now
Or I will miss the vehicle launch."

"Wait, young marine technician
For to this tale there is much more,
Hearing about this old sailor's misfortune
May help your contest score."

The student sits down on a stone:
He cannot chose but hear;
And on went that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Buccaneer.

"The chieftain lay dead--Oh! What evil looks
Had I from old and young,
Instead of a jeweled necklace,
Around my neck the Jolly Roger was hung.

I had done a hellish thing that would cause us woe
For I had killed the only one to know
Just how to save both galleon and priceless cargo
So when listing ship took seawater on her deck,
Panicked pirates paced about
Unaware how to prevent the terrible wreck.

Gold, Gold everywhere,
And how the planks did bend,
Gold, Gold everywhere,
But not a Piece of Eight to spend.

More water came in
Filling the crew with dread
Suddenly I was alone and afloat
The ship went down like lead."

The Buccaneer ends his tale and points
To the wreck site off the Florida coast
Says the student, "Old man, I will try my best to find your chests,
Now I must get to the competition or I'm toast!"

"Farewell, farewell! But this I tell
To you, your ROV and 12-volt battery,
Those who pursue marine technology careers
Will find wealth beneath the sea."

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So students, I challenge you to retrieve the Buccaneer's loot:
Porcelain teacups, wine bottles, pearls, bars of <u>gold</u>-- not tin,
Black rubies, and shining yellow coins are all within your grasp.
With ROV, keen eyes, and skillful hands your team can win!

Adapted from *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, a poem written in 1798 by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.