

CHRIS OKE

FIVE LIVES LOST

SS Thistlegorm

Sunk by enemy warplanes, 1941

Five lives lost

May as well be Père Lachaise—
broken boneyard haunted

by tourists and remora.
Jacques Cousteau discovered her first

with help from local fishermen,
who saw through the holes in torn nets.

He rescued a drowned captain's safe
and a ship's bell,

tested on the surface with the flick
of a water-wizened finger. No ring.

Some things you can't recover.
It's to them the sea erects its monuments:

Tombstone bouquets of carnivorous coral,
feeding on the living every night.