

The Chanteyman

C-----Am----F-----C
Now I heard the wind a-calling, calling from the sea;
-----Am----F-----G
It was like an old friend singing a song well known to me;
C*-----Am-----F-----C
To the tune the creaking blocks make, when the running lines do strain --
-----Am-----F-----G-C
Chanteyman, oh, chanteyman, sing your songs a-gain!

Chorus:

C*-----Am-----F-----C
Chanteyman, oh, chanteyman, sing your songs a-gain!
C*-----Am-----F-----G
Sing out long for all that's gone, all the ships and men;
C*-----Am-----F-----C
You can sail the high seas over, from shore to farthest shore;
-----Am-----F-----G--C
Meet with ships a-plenty, but her like you'll find no more.

Then I heard the yard mast-headed with a "Rolling Rio Grande,"
Beating up 'gainst the Westerlies, with every rag she'd stand;
I heard the Cape Horn greybeards, go plunging on their way,
And I saw big Northers sweeping down Valparaiso Bay. (CHO)

I heard it as an echo, from other times than these,
The tramping cursing watches, the roaring rolling seas;
The shrill wind round us shrieking, the cracking volleying sail,
And the tatters of our voices flying o'r a Cape Horn gale. (CHO)

Then I heard the pumps a-clanking, all bitter night and day,
While rolling lee rail under, like a half-tide rock she lay;
And I heard the old man swearing, "Sing some other song!"
For we drove him stamping crazy raising "Old Stormalong." (CHO)

So now she's gone with all aboard, gone with the lads I knew;
She's gone beyond all knowing, as ships and sailors do;
And there's nothing but a dream left, of the days we used to know;
She's gone but not forgotten -- was it all so long ago? (CHO)

* High C

The Chanteyman

I heard a wind at sunset come calling from the sea;
It was like a friend's voice singing a song well known to me
To a tune the creaking blocks make with the whistling ropes a-straining,
(Chanteyman, chanteyman, sing a song again!)

Gustily, lustily down the drift of time,
Many a crashing chorus came, many a rough old rhyme;
Sun and shadow, fun and folly, dreams forgotten long,
From the full tide blowing like a far faint song.

I heard the yard mast-headed with "Rolling Rio Grande,"
Beating up against the Westerlies with every rag she'd stand;
I heard the great Horn greybeards go plunging on their way,
And the big Northers sweeping down Valparaiso Bay.

I heard it all like echoes from other days than these,
The tramping cursing watches, the pouring pooping seas;
The shrill wind past us shrieking, the cracking volleying sail,
And the tatters of our voices flying down the roaring gale.

I heard the pumps clanking all a bitter night and day
When, rolling rails under, like a half tide rock she lay,
And the old man swore, if sing we must, we'd sing some other song
For we drove him stamping crazy with the tune of "Stormalong."

Chanteyman, chanteyman, gone are ships and men;
Gone as went the days and years we spent so careless then;
If you sail the high seas over from shore to farthest shore
You may meet with ships a-plenty, but her like you'll find no more.

For she's gone with all aboard her and gone the lads we knew;
Yes, she's gone beyond our knowing, as ships and sailors do;
And nothing but a dream left of days we used to know,
(Chanteyman, chanteyman, was it long ago?)

And sometimes we went hungry, and mostly we went poor,
But the lives we've lived already are those we'd live once more;
Fair weather and foul weather, the shine with the rain,
(Chanteyman, chanteyman, just the same again!)

Notes:

Transcribed at the Imperial War Museum, London, UK, from *The China Sea and Other Poems*, a handwritten manuscript by Cicely Fox Smith.