

A LAD FROM SARDINIA

ONE

The Squall

When I was a lad in Sardinia,
When chores for Aunt Harmy were o'er,
I'd take me bro, Lym (Lime)
Who was ten at the time,
And we'd run to where ships come to shore.

Each Saturday morning, like clockwork,
I, fourteen and a half I recall,
We'd head o'er to *The Venerable Pig*,
Or, the closest to Chuk
Called *The Squall*.

Where the men of the sea came a' swaggerin',
To swill down their whiskeys or ales;
To exchange their best stories, Misfortunes an' glories --
Me'n Lym heard incredible tales!

We rode the great swells
Of the green seas of hell
With that Portegee, Lucas nee Ganajh (Ganage)
And we whimpered as Roat
Had a blade cut his throat
By that feared pirate mob,
(an' though severed his gob,
he doth manage).

An' w'full-bearded Guezt (Guest) In that bitter cold nest,
We, too, braced -- relentless! Icided! Knife in the chest!
And when he shouted "Land, Land!"
Me'n Lym had to stand!
And cheer -- Oh, so did the rest!
(And that night I thanked Jesus
That Guezt was still here).

And our hearts fairly burst
As old "Shark Bait Tipper"--
Though he told it quite chipper --

Even winked at us lads
(Oh, I think they all had)

He rehearsed of the time
He was tossed in the foam;
'Ad a staredown w' 'Whitey'
And lost near a stone.

Aye, we'd sit for hours, Transfixed, buggy-eyed;
Sometimes we laughed
And sometimes we cried;
Keel-haulin'!... Treasures!... Slavers!... Blue Whales!
Ghost ships ! Pirates!...
No end of their tales!

And oft' someone'd start with an old shanty verse
Some sang it better --
Some of course, worse.

Thomas played guitar --
Sal on mouth organ,
Sometimes they'd sing songs til
One in the morning:

*“And it's Wáy, Heigh, Anchors away, boys
It's time to hoist up the sail, boys –
And it's Wáy, Heigh,
Anchors away, boys
Tell the Captain the cook's still in jail, boys!*

*And it's Wáy, Heigh, Anchors away, boys
It's time to be out on the brine, boys –
And it's Wáy, Heigh
Anchors away, boys
Tell Molly you'll see her next time, boys!*

*And it's Wáy, Heigh, Anchors away, boys
It's time for our sea legs again, boys –
And it's Wáy, Heigh,
Anchors away, boys
Make sure we've got plenty of rum, boys!”*

An' The Squall come alive with the laughter --
Melody'd ring to the rafters!
And of course, me'n Lym would join in,

And we'd sway back and forth with the men.

Sometimes a regular line
Got changed to a new one-

Like:

"Make sure we've got plenty of rum!"

Would be changed to:

"I'm so drunk I can't find my bum!"

Of course, that made *The Squall* even more fun.

Now, Aunt Harmy suspected
Just where we was going,
(I spoze all that swagger
An' talk was a'showin');

So, one Saturday morning
She followed us, bold 'n

But wait!

There's more of this tale
That should first be unfoldin'!
One other thing happened on that fateful day!...
Just bear with me further --
A few lines if I may...

In a candle-lit corner
Sat a stranger, alone; Didn't say nothin',
Just sat like a stone.

He was rigged up in whites --
Starched, crisp! Like a soldier;
Had anchors for buttons,
Gold cords at his shoulders.

Now, in the harbor I'd seen
A sleek Brigantine moored.
Ahh, this must be the captain,
I figured...for sure!

So we buoyed up the courage
To sit where he sat,
When I asked for his name,
He leaned over an' spat!

We looked 'round the room,
And we stared at the faces;

The others drew closer,
In fact several paces.

Chairs scraped the floor
As men, out of respect
Gathered quiet...to listen,
... Some new tale, I expect.

Soon we were surrounded
By eager ears waitin',
The Squall became eerie
With anticipation;

'The Cap' lit his pipe
With a candle lit flare,
Flashed eyes at his audience,
An' tussled Lym's hair.

"I come to the sea, boy
Pure accident.
Now, I'm not sayin'
Life ain't been well spent."

He said , "Son, I guess
Is no more'n you."
(Roat pulled out his chaw
And bit off a chew....)

"My name, son? It's Harmony, Harmony's the name;
Just like your Aunt Harmony, My name's the same...."