

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FSS 37350

BORN OF ANOTHER TIME

SONGS OF THE SAILORS - SONGS OF THE SEA

Tom Goux & Jacek Sulanowski



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Jacek Sulanowski



Tom Goux

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BELIEVE ME, DEAREST SUSAN (ZITHER) 3:30
CAN OF GROG (ENGLISH CONCERTINA) 2:45
GRADH GEAL MO CHRIDH, an Eriskay love lilt (CELTIC HARP) 3:20
MARRIED TO A MERMAID (ENGLISH CONCERTINA)
HIGH BARBARY (BASS RECORDERS) 4:11
CHINEE BUMBOATMAN (BANJO) 4:15

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RETURN TO ARCHIVE
 CENTRE FOR FOLKLORE PROGRAMS
 AND CULTURAL STUDIES
 SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

TOM GOUX and JACEK SULANOWSKI are among the leading interpreters of traditional music of the sea. Their credentials, however, are not those of the folklorist or ethnomusicologist. Jacek Sulanowski, with a Ph.D. in Geophysical Sciences is professionally occupied teaching at Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts and doing summer research at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Tom Goux holds a degree in voice and choral conducting and is a recognized authority on elemental music and movement for children. But, together they form a performing duo that brings the breath of life to the songs of sailors and their music at sea and ashore. Always conjuring up a vivid recollection of the Age of Sail, they have delighted concert and festival audiences across the country, given programs for schools and museums and are members of the faculty of the Sea Education Association (S.E.A.), a university level science and sail training course given in Woods Hole, MA and aboard the *R.V. Westward*.

Produced by Stuart Frank
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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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Introduction

by Stuart M. Frank, Director, Kendall Whaling Museum

These days, with interest in sea songs increasing geometrically amidst a national frenzy of tall-ships preservation and marine ecology, lots of people have been singing deepwater songs from the square-rigger days. There are currently more recordings in print in this genre than ever before; the sea festival phenomenon is in fluorescence across North America and the British Isles; and the services of Bill Doerflinger, Stan Hugill, Bert Lloyd, and others who have collected these songs or heard them at first hand, are much in demand.

Unfortunately, there is often a tedious redundancy to much of it, with the constant repetition of the same songs and tunes (mostly learned from Stan Hugill, Louis Killen, and Roberts & Barrand), to the point that some, in contradistinction to the true folk process of improvisation and stylistic innovation, have become near canonical. Few interpreters have been resourceful or skilled enough to find new material in the field or in manuscript, develop new ways of presenting familiar pieces, or, at least, present a few of the lesser-known and less often sung items from such collections as Colcord's, Harlow's or Huntington's.

Rarely, a singing duo comes along which combines a sensitivity to the unusual and innovative with a strong commitment to the tradition from which the songs arise, and both musical and performance abilities adequate to achieve a genuinely worthwhile departure—a departure not from the tradition, but from what everybody else seems to be doing just at the moment in the twentieth-century revival. Tom Goux, musicologist, educator and instrumentalist, contributes the developed instincts of a classically-trained musician and a finely-tuned creative understanding of the possibilities within a tradition. Jacek Sulanowski, scientist, oceanographer and natural musician, adds energy, his fine voice, and a delicate regard for the (often indelicate) blood-and-bones origin of these songs among seamen and fisherfolk. Together, their judgment is keen and their presentation compelling. They have culled fresh material, devised new (yet, nevertheless, often orthodox) arrangements for familiar songs, and have here created a potpourri from their very large repertoire. While any recording would be a poor substitute for the power, brilliance and humor of their performances on stage, this one is a most delightful sample of their work and a welcome addition to the sea music genre.

Sharon, Massachusetts
15 January 1982

PREFACE

About ten years ago we fell in together. It was a happy accident for ever since we've been enjoying our music and especially our exploration of an intriguing sub-species in the world of folksong: the traditional music of the sea. What we've found and continue to find is an ever-expanding horizon of ocean-going songs, of shore tunes, the songs of work and leisure from the Age of Sail. We've come across flowery verses loved by men who could neither read nor write - art songs embraced by those with wind-worn faces and calloused hands. Jack Tar had a song for a belly-laugh and one to make you wince and we've found that his tunes consistently reward our attention with a wonderful and warming authenticity.

We have also discovered an astonishing variety within this body of music. From the simple threads of a chantey done at the halyards or the pumps, and a spit-in-your-eye drinking song raised with a pint, after all was made fast, we've followed tune after tune into the midst of a delightful weave of musical elements - a pattern of accent, rhythm, mode and sentiment, cultural nuance; the hearty and heart-felt expression of those whose life and often times death was the sea. Below, a passage from Richard Henry Dana's Two Years Before the Mast bears witness to the grand assortment of music in the forecastle:

"...of course, we soon had music. They sang in the true sailor's style, and the rest of the crew, which was a remarkably musical one, joined in the choruses. They had many of the latest sailor songs, which had not yet got about among our merchantmen, and which they were very choice of. They began soon after we came on board, and kept up until after two bells, when the second mate came forward and called "the Alert's away!" Battle-songs, drinking-songs, boat-songs, love-songs, and everything else, they seemed to have a complete assortment of, and I was glad to find that "All in the Downs," "Poor Tom Bowling," "The Bay of Biscay," "List, ye Landsmen!" and all those classical songs of the sea, still held their places. In addition to these, they had picked up at the theatres and other places a few songs of a little more genteel cast, which they were very proud of; and I shall never forget hearing an old salt, who had broken his voice by hard drinking on shore, and bellowing from the mast-head in a hundred north-westerns, with all manner of ungovernable trills and quavers...roar out at the top of his voice, breaking each word up into half a dozen syllables. This was very popular, and Jack was called upon every night to give them his "sentimental song."

But music does not live in the written account, in the memory. It lives in the air. It must be sung, it must be played. Our experience has been that a good song, neglected and all but forgotten, always rewards its rescuer. More than that, it once more becomes a shared gift between singer and listener - it becomes something of this world and lives again within us, though it may have been born of another time.

Regarding the preparation of this recording, may we offer special thanks to Stuart Frank, Susan Goux, Tessie Goux and Margaret Sulanowska and our sincere appreciation to Jack Hathaway, Jim Mavor and John Thomson, Jim Millinger and Corey Cramer of the Sea Education Association.



Photo by Tom Goux

SIDE ONE

1. SO EARLY IN THE MORNIN'

A halyard or pump chantey of undeniable energy and vitality. Stan Hugill tells us it was a prime tune for improvising - anything a sailor was likely to "love" might have been included. Here Jacek takes the part of chanteyman, Tom is the crew.

The mate got drunk an' he went below to take a swig from his bottle-o,
 So early in the mornin' the sailor loves his bottle-o!
 His bottle-o, his bottle-o, the sailor loves his bottle-o!
 A bottle o' rum, a bottle o' gin, a bottle o' Irish whisky-o!
 The baccy-o, terbaccy-o, the sailor loves his baccy-o!
 A packet o' shag and a packet o' twist, a plug o' hard terbaccy-o!
 The lassies-o, the maidens-o, the sailor loves the judies-o!
 A lass from the 'Pool, a gal from the Tyne, the gals across the water-o!
 A bully rough-house, a bully rough-house, the sailor loves a rough-house-o!
 A tread on me coat, an all-hands-in, a jolly good rough an' tumble-o!
 A sing-song-o, a sing-song-o, the sailor loves a sing-song-o!
 A drinkin' song, a song of love, a ditty o' seas and shipmates-o!

2. BELIEVE ME, DEAREST SUSAN

Many an art song of the 19th century found its way into the forecandle. Here's one transcribed by Joanna Colcord from the singing of Joseph McGinnis who said of the song, "I learned it from an ex-man-o'-war sailor while sailing on the Great Lakes; he told me it was popular in the Navy in his day." As Jacek sings, Tom plays the zither which was a popular parlor instrument of a century ago.

When the wind swells the canvas and the anchor's arip,
 And the ensign's hauled down from the peak of the ship,
 When the land is receding, and fresh blows the breeze
 That bears us away o'er the crest of the seas,
 Hope swells my fond bosom, and this is my strain:
 Believe me, dearest Susan, I will come back again!

When the decks are all clear, and the foe is in sight,
 And the ensign waves proudly, to challenge the fight,
 When the smoke of the broadside is curling around,
 And the cheers grow the louder, the louder's the sound,
 Hope swells my fond bosom, and this is my strain:
 Believe me, dearest Susan, I will come back again!

When the enemy's struck, and her colors are down,
 And the flag of the victor o'er the vanquished is flown,
 And we mourn for our dead that have fallen that day,
 While our hearts are with those who are then far away,
 Hope swells my fond bosom, and this is my strain:
 Believe me, dearest Susan, I will come back again!

When the winds and the waves are in tumult and strife,
 And the fever stalks forth, as a foe to man's life,
 Whether distant the climate, in snow or in sun,
 'Ere the battle's been fought, or the battle is won,
 I will think of the girl, who enlivens this strain:
 Believe me, dearest Susan, I will come back again!



Photo by Danielle Guay

3. CAN OF GROG

Gale Huntington of Martha's Vineyard collected this as he compiled that fine work entitled, *Songs the Whalemens Sang*, wherein he notes its source: a journal from the ship *Ann* out of Salem, Massachusetts - the year being 1776. The melody holds fragments of "The British Grenadiers" a popular strain during the mid-18th century. Jacek leads the way, Tom accompanies with harmony and concertina.

When up the shrouds the sailor goes
And ventures on the yard
The landsmen who no better know
Believe his lot is hard
Bold Jack with smiles each danger meets
Weighs anchor heaves the log
Trims all the sails belays his sheets
And drinks his can of grog

If to engage they give the word
To quarters he'll repair
Now winding in the dismal flood
Now quivering in the air
When waves 'gainst rocks do rend and roar
You'll ne'er hear him repine
Though he's on Greenland's icy shore
Or burning 'neath the Line

When sailing orders do arrive
Bold Jack he takes his leave
My dear my sweetest Pol he cries
I pray now do not grieve
Thy Jack will take his daily can
Of grog and drink to thee
In hopes that thou will not forget
Thy sailor who's at sea

But should thou false or fickle prove
To Jack who loves thee dear
No more upon my native shore
Can I with joy appear
But restless as the briny main
Must heartless heave the log
Shall trim the sails and try to drown
My grief in cans of grog

4. GRADH GEAL MO CHRIDH, an Eriskay love lilt

This ancient tune from the island of Eriskay is the lament of an Islesman who must leave the woman he loves. The Gaelic verse alludes to his loneliness and sorrow which are so great that his harp refuses to play. We found it in the first volume of The Songs of the Hebrides by Marjory Kennedy-Fraser and Kenneth MacLeod. Tom decorates the air with the Celtic harp and low harmony.

Bheir mi oro bhan o Bheir mi oro bhan i
Bheir mi oru o ho Sad am I without thee

When I'm lonely dear white heart
Black the night or wild the sea
By love's light my foot finds
The old pathway to thee

'Na mo chlarsaich cha robh ceol
'Na mo mheoirean cha robh agh
Rinn do phogsa mo leon
Fhuair mi Eolas an dain

Thou'rt the music of my heart,
Harp of joy, oh cruit mo chridh
Moon of guidance by night,
Strength and light thou'rt to me.

5. MARRIED TO A MERMAID

One of the jolliest of the English forebitters to be found in Stan Hugill's beautifully illustrated collection, Songs of the Sea.

There was a gay young farmer, who lived on Sal'sb'ry Plain,
He lov'd a rich knight's daughter dear, an' she lov'd him again.
The knight was so distressed, that they should sweethearts be,
That he had the farmer soon pressed, and he whipp'd him off to sea,

Singin' Rule Britannia! Two tanners make a bob,
Five make two-an'-six, an' one for his knob!

'Twas on the deep Atlantic midst the equinoctial gales,
The young farmer fell overboard among the sharks and whales;
He disappeared so quickly, headlong down went he,
And he went out of sight, like a streak of light, to the bottom of the deep blue sea

We lowered a boat to find him, we thought to see his corpse,
When up to the top he came with a shock, and said in a voice so hoarse,
"My shipmates and my messmates, oh, do not weep for me,
For I'm married to a mermaid at the bottm of the deep blue sea."

6. HIGH BARBARY

Regarding the roots of this old English ballad, both Colcord and Hugill direct those interested to Patterson's Anthology under the title "The Saylor's Onely Delight: Showing the Brave Fight betweene the George Aloe and the Sweepetake and certaine Frenchmen on the Sea." According to Hugill the tune in our rendition is older than the more familiar chantey version. A trio of bass recorders, instruments often heard in the music of Medieval and Renaissance Europe, renders the accompaniment.

There were two lofty ships, from old England come,
Blow high! Blow low! And so sailed we!
One was the Prince of Luther and the other the Prince of Wales,
All a-cruising down the coast of High Barbary!

"Aloft there, aloft there!" our bully bosun cried,
"Look ahead, look astern, look to weather and a-lee!"

"There's naught upon our stern, sir, there's naught upon our lee,
But there's a lofty ship to windward and she's sailing fast and free."

"O hail her! O hail her!" our gallant captain cried,
"Are you a man-o'-war or a privateer?" cried he.

"Oh, no I'm not a man-o'-war, nor privateer," cried he,
"But I'm a salt sea pirate, all a-looking for my fee!"

For broadside, for broadside a long time we lay,
Till at last the Prince of Luther shot the pirate's mast away.

"O quarter! O quarter!" those pirates they did cry,
But the quarter that we give them, was to sink them in the sea.

With cutlass and gun we fought for hours three,
The ship it was their coffin and their grave it was the sea!

7. CHINEE BUMBOATMAN

Stan Hugill taught us this gem - he sings it in the true shipboard style: unaccompanied. We added a bit of an orchestration just for the fun of it...T. Goux picks the banjo and tells the tale while Prof. Sulanowski plays the gong.

I'll sing you a story of trouble and woe, that'll cause ya to shudder and shiver,
Concernin' that Chinee bumboatman, he sailed the Yangtze River,
He wuz an heathen of high degree, so the josshouse records show,
His family name wuz Wing Chang Loo, but the sailors all called him Jim
Crow-ee-eye-o-ee-eye!
Hitchee-kum, kit-chee-kum, ya! ya! ya!
Sailorman no likee me,
No savy the story of Wing Chang Loo,
Too much of the bober-eye-ee, Kye-ee!

Now Wing Chang Loo he fell in love with a gal called Ah Chu Fong.
She 'ad two eyes like pumpkin seeds, an' slippers two inches long,
But, Ah Chu loved that pirate bold, with all of her heart and liver,
He wuz captain of a double-decked junk, and he sailed the Yangtze
River-eye-iver-eye!

Now, Wing Chang Loo, he heard o' this and he swore an 'orrible oath,
 "If Ah Chu marries that pirate bold, I'll make sausage-meat of 'em both!"
 So he hoisted his blood-red battle flag, put into the Yangtze River,
 He sailed her east an' south an' west, til that pirate he did
 diskiver-eye-iver-eye!

Well, the drums they beat to quarters an' the cannons they did loudly roar.
 The red-hot dumplin' flew like lead, an' the scuppers they ran with gore.
 The pirate paced the quarter deck without a shake or shiver,
 He wuz shot in the arse with a hard-boiled egg and it pinitriated his
 liver-eye-iver-eye!

The dyin' pirate feebly cried, "We'll give the foe more shot,
 If I can't marry Ah Chu Fong, then Wing Chang Loo shall not."
 When a pease-pudden 'ot hit the bumboat's side, it caused an 'orrible scene,
 It upset a pot of 'ot bow-wow soup, an' exploded the
 magazyee-eenee-eye-eenee!

SIDE TWO

1. ROSIE

A close relation of the ubiquitous "Haul away, Joe," ROSIE is another chantey which could have been used either at the pumps or halyards. Of its first cousin "Haul away, Joe" Hugill says, "...always sung with a bit of an Irish brogue ..."

Now, when I was a little boy, an' so my mother told me,
 Way, haul away, we'll haul away for Rosie,
 Way, haul away, we'll haul away for Rosie-o!
 That if I did not kiss the girls my lips would all grow mouldy.
 Way, haul away, we'll haul away for Rosie,
 Way, haul away, we'll haul away for Rosie-o!

Well I sailed the seas for many a year not knowin' what I was missin'
 Then I set my sails before the gales and started in a-kissin'

Then I found myself an English girl, and she sure wasn't civil,
 I clapped a plaster on her mouth and sent her to the devil.

Sheepskin, pitch an' beeswax - they make a bully plaster,
 The more she tried to get it off, the more it stuck the faster.

So listen while I sing to you about my darlin' Nancy,
 She's copper-bottomed, clipper-rigged, she's just my style and fancy.

You may talk about your Liverpool girls and round-the-corner Sallys,
 But they couldn't make the grade, my boys, with the girls from down our alley.

Once I was in Ireland a-diggin' turf and taties,
 But now I'm on a lime-juice ship, a-haulin' on the braces.

St. Patrick was a gentleman an' he came of decent people,
 He built a church in Dublin town an' on it set a steeple.

From Ireland, then, he drove the snakes an' drank up all the whisky,
 This made him dance an' sing an' jig, he felt so fine an' frisky.

Well, you call yourself a second mate, but you cannot tie a bowline,
 You cannot even stand up straight when the packet she's a-rollin'.

2. HEARTS OF GOLD

This song belongs to the familiar genre of songs which lionize one calling while discrediting all others. While considerable doubt yet exists about the actual age of this song, it seems likely that it was already old when it appeared in the log of the whaler Bengal in 1832. Yet another song from Gale Huntington's excellent collection.

'Twas the plowing of the raging seas
 Was always my delight
 While those loving landlubbers
 No dangers do they know
 Like we long jack hearts of gold
 That plows the ocean through
 Yes like we long jack hearts of gold
 That plows the ocean through

They are always with the pretty girls
 A-setting them fine treats
 A-filling of their pretty heads
 With the work they've done in a corn field
 But the cutting of the grass and weeds
 Is all that they can do
 While we long jack hearts of gold
 We plow the ocean through

'Tis when the sun it does go down
 They lay aside the plow
 And can the work no longer stand
 'Tis home that they must go
 Now they got their suppers with content
 And into bed they do crawl
 While we long jack hearts of gold
 Stand many a bitter squall

The seas they run full mountains high
 Which toss us up and down
 We are in the midst of dangers
 For fear our ship might found
 And every man be on our decks
 Our goodly ship to guard
 Step up step up my lively lads
 Send down the topgallant yard

So come all you pretty damsels
 The truth you did but know
 The dangers of the raging main
 From labors unto you
 You would have more contempt for them
 Than ever yet was known
 You would hate those loving landlubbers
 That always stays at home

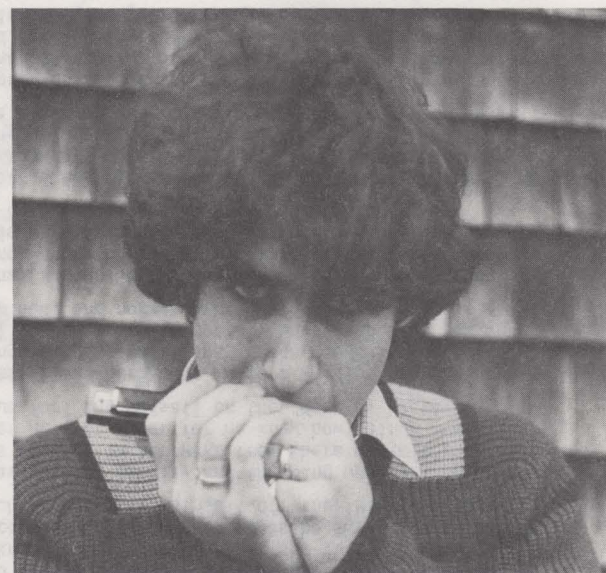


Photo by Tom Goux

3. EBENEZER

With its rogues gallery of unsavory characters, this has become a favorite with us. The five-string banjo is here complemented by the harmonica playing of Richard Hunter, pictured above, whose company we also enjoy on our final tune, 'OL ZEB. Richard, a true virtuoso widely known for his concert and recording work, is the author of Jazz Harp, an Oak Publication.

I shipped on board the "Ebenezer", every day was scub an' grease her,
 Send us aloft to tear her down and if we growled they'd blow us down.
 Git along boys, git along do, handy me boys, so handy,
 Git along boys, git along do, handy me boys, so handy.

The Old Man was a drunken geezer, couldn't sail the "Ebenezer"
Learnt his trade on a Chinese junk, he spent most time, sir, in his bunk.

The Chief Mate's name was Dickie Green, sir, dirtiest beggar you've ever seen, sir,
Walkin' his poop with a bucko roll, may the sharks have his body and the
devil have his soul!

A Boston buck was second greaser, used to ship in Limejuice ships, sir,
Limey packets got too hot, he jumped them and he cursed the lot.

The Bosun came from Tennessee, sir, always wore a Blackball cheeser,
He had a gal in every port, at least that's what his missus thought!

Well, the "Ebenezer" was so old, sir, she knew Columbus as a boy, sir,
Pump her, bullies, night and day, to help her git to Liverpool Bay.

Wet hash it was our only grub, sir, breakfast, dinner, and for supper,
Bread was as tough as any brass, and the meat was as salt as Lot's wife's ass!

We sailed away before a breezer, bound away for Vallaparaizer,
Off the Horn she lost her sticks, the molly-hawks picked up the bits.

4. THE GIRLS AROUND CAPE HORN

An account of an easy time around the dreaded Cape and an easier time with the girls
ashore. From Joanna Colcord's Songs of American Sailormen.

The famed ship "California", a ship of high renown,
She lay in Boston Harbor 'longside of the pretty town,
A-waiting for our orders to sail far from home,
And our orders came for Rio, boys, and then around Cape Horn.

When we arrived in Rio, boys, we lay there quite a while,
A-fixing up our rigging and bending our new sails.
From ship to ship they cheered us as we did sail along,
And they wished us pleasant weather while rounding of Cape Horn.

While rounding of Cape Horn, my boys, fair nights and pleasant days.
Next place we dropped our anchor was in Valparaiso Bay,
Where those Spanish girls they did roll down, I solemnly do swear
They far excel those Yankee girls with their dark and wavy hair.

They love a Yankee sailor when he goes on a spree;
He'll dance and sing and make things ring, and his money he will spend free,
And when his money it is all gone on him they won't impose;
They far excel those Liverpool girls who will pawn and steal his clothes.

Here's a health to Valparaiso along the Chile main,
Likewise to those Peruvian girls, they treated me so fine.
If ever I live to get paid off, I'll sit and drink till morn
A health to the dashing Spanish girls I met around Cape Horn.

5. THE MARY L. MACKAY

The exploits of the "Banks" schooners are legend. This is the story of a record-setting
run from Maine to Nova Scotia including reference to a curious form of propulsion. Collected
by Helen Creighton in Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia. Jacek hammers the open drone
accompaniment fiddle-stick style (the source for this performance is the mountain dul-
cimer) and Tom keeps the whistle "high aloft".

Oh come, all you hearty haddockers, who winter fishing go,
And brave the seas upon the Banks in stormy winds and snow,
And ye who love hard driving come listen to my lay
Of the run we made from Portland on the "Mary L. MacKay".

We hung the muslin on her, the wind began to hum,
Twenty hardy Nova Scotia men most full of Portland rum.
Mainsail, foresail, jib and jumbo on that wild December day,
As we passed out Cape Elizabeth and slugged for Fundy Bay.

We slammed her by Monhegan as the gale began to scream,
Our vessel took to dancing in a way that was no dream.
A howler o'er the toprail we steered sou'west away,
Oh, she was a hound for running was the "Mary L. MacKay".

"Storm along and drive along, punch her through the ribs,
Don't mind your boarding combers as the solid green she dips.
Just mind your eye and watch the wheel," our skipper, he did say,
"Clear decks we'll sport tomorrow on the 'Mary L. MacKay'".

Oh, the seas were looking ugly and the crests were heaving high,
Our vessel simply scooped her till our decks were never dry.
The cook he mouthed his pots and pans and unto us did say,
"You'll get nothing else but mugups on the 'Mary L. MacKay'".

We laced a hawser to the wreck and caulked the cable box.
We tested all our shackles and our fore and mainsail blocks.
We double gripped our dories while the gang began to pray
For a breeze to tear the bits from out the "Mary L. MacKay".

We slammed her to Matinicus, the skipper hauled the log,
"Sixteen knots! Lord Harry, ain't she just the gal to jog?"
The half-canned wheelsman shouted as he swung her on her way,
"Just watch me tear the mainsail off the 'Mary L. MacKay'".

The rum was passing merrily and the gang was feeling grand,
Long necks dancing in her wake from where we left the land.
Our skipper he kept sober for he knew how things would lay,
And made us furl the mainsail on the "Mary L. MacKay".

Under foresail and her jumbo we tore wildly through the night,
The foaming, surging whitecaps in the moonshine made a sight,
Would fill your heart with terror, boys, and wish you were away
At home in bed, and not aboard the "Mary L. MacKay".

Over on the Lurcher Shoals the seas were running strong,
The roaring, angry breakers from three to four miles long,
And in this wild inferno, boys, we soon had hell to pay,
We didn't care a hoot aboard the "Mary L. MacKay".

We laced our wheelsman to the box as he steered through the gloom,
A big sea hove his dory mate right over the main boom.
It tore the oil pants off his legs and you could hear him say,
"There's a power of water flying o'er the 'Mary L. MacKay'".

Our skipper didn't care to make his wife a widow yet,
He swung her off to Yarmouth Cape with just her foresail set,
And passed Forchu next morning and shut in at break of day,
And soon in sheltered harbour lay the "Mary L. MacKay".

From Portland, Maine, to Yarmouth Sound two twenty miles we ran,
In eighteen hours, my bully boys, now beat that if you can.
The gang said 'twas seamanship, the skipper he kept dumb,
But the force that drove our vessel was the power of Portland rum.

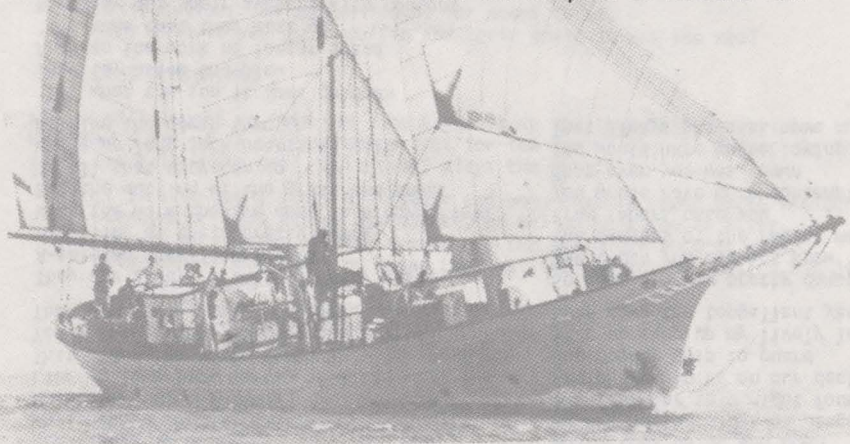


Photo courtesy of S.E.A.



Photo courtesy of Tessie Goux

6. BORN OF ANOTHER TIME

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Mimi Goux, who looks out at us from another time and place - an era of broad-brimmed hats and kid gloves - was Tom's grandmother. This is what he says of this story which she carried with her all her life ...

"Coastal folk have always lived in the power of the sea; one day the giver of life and livelihood the next a ruthless executioner. Here is a story from the girlhood of my Grandmother. She was raised on the south coast of California where her father was foreman of the oil depot at Gaviota. I heard her tell it long ago and it stayed within me until I was ready to give it the voice of music. Now I've come to realize it's truly a song of the sea. It belongs with those many haunting melodies that aren't about sailors or ships - but, rather of those who wait for the ships' return, sometimes forever."

On the coast, in California, there's a place called Gaviota,
Not even a town, just a little place, I doubt you've ever heard of Gaviota.
But, a little lady from another time spent her early days in that sunny clime,
And now and then she used to speak of her life there on the shore.

She was just a girl in 1910, all graciousness and rhyme,
Just a girl in 1910, born of another time.

Now it seems the ships out on the sea would call at Gaviota,
They'd fill their bellies up with oil then steam on down the coast or way up north,
And a young sea captain would step ashore, knock upon her father's door,
They'd walk together on the sand, he asked her for her hand.

Lucien Johnsen was the captain's name - the lady was my Grandma.
She told me of him in '61, half-a-century passing since she loved him,
But she recalled a gift he had brought to her, a pretty muff made of seal fur,
Said she kept it for so many years, her voice was full of tears.

Now a busy highway rushes by the place called Gaviota.
For fifty years she knew that Captain Johnsen was never to return;
Off Alaskan shores the ship went down, all hands either froze or drown,
I wonder if he thought of her? She remembered him.

She was just a girl in 1910, all graciousness and rhyme,
Just a girl in 1910, born of another time.

7. OL' ZEB

The almost life-long affair of Captain Zebulon Tilton of Martha's Vineyard with the fast and graceful two-masted schooner Alice S. Wentworth was a celebrated one. It was said of them that together they "... could sail to Chicago on a heavy dew." Zeb's fiercely independent Islander disposition and mistrust of new gadgetry accounted for his working the Alice on wind power alone well into the era of steamers and donkey engines. This song, written by Larry Kaplan, fine singer and close friend of Gale and Mildred Tilton Huntington, describes the parting of Zeb and Alice when the Captain at age seventy-seven, and in failing health, had to give her up. In the refrain Zeb is accompanied by his two daughters, Rosie and Gertie, to "...see old Alice sail again."

I'm not tired of the wind, I'm not weary of the sea,
But they've prob'ly had their belly-full of a damned old coot like me.
I'm goin' ashore; she's bound for better days,
But I'll see her topsail flyin' when she comes down off the waves.

Oh, Rosie git my Sunday shoes, Gertie git my walkin' cane
We'll take another walk to see old Alice sail again.

I wish I had a nickel for all the men I used to know
That could load three cord of lumber in a half-an-hour or so,
Who could put out sail by haulin', 'stead of donkeyin' around,
But then I'd be the poorest coasterman this side of Edgartown.

Any fool can work an engine, takes brains to work a sail,
And I never seen no steamer make much good out of a gale.
You can go and pay your taxes on the rationed gas you git,
At least, to me, the wind is free, and they haven't run out yet.

Now if I ever git back to her, ya know I'll treat her just the same,
I'll jibe her when I want to and sail in freezin' rain,
I'll park old Alice on the beach, go dancin' in the town,
'Cause a man who's fit for hangin' prob'ly never will git drown.

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LITHO IN U.S.A.