

# The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald

Gordon Lightfoot

The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down  
Of the big lake they call Gitche Gumee  
The lake, it is said, never gives up her dead  
When the skies of November turn gloomy  
With a load of iron ore twenty-six thousand tons more  
Than the Edmund Fitzgerald weighed empty  
That good ship and true was a bone to be chewed  
When the gales of November came early

The ship was the pride of the American side  
Coming back from some mill in Wisconsin  
As the big freighters go, it was bigger than most  
With a crew and good captain well seasoned  
Concluding some terms with a couple of steel firms  
When they left fully loaded for Cleveland  
Then later that night when the ship's bell rang  
Could it be the north wind they'd been feelin'?

The wind in the wires made a tattle-tale sound  
When the wave broke over the railing  
And every man knew, as the captain did too  
'Twas the witch of November come stealin'  
The dawn came late and the breakfast had to wait  
When the gales of November came slashin'  
When afternoon came it was freezing rain  
In the face of a hurricane west wind

When suppertime came, the old cook came on deck  
Sayin' "Fellas, it's too rough to feed ya"  
At seven PM a main hatchway caved in  
He said, "Fellas, it's been good to know ya"  
The captain wired in he had water comin' in  
And the good ship and crew was in peril  
And later that night when his lights went out of sight  
Came the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald

Does anyone know where the love of God goes  
When the waves turn the minutes to hours?  
The searchers all say they'd have made Whitefish Bay  
If they'd put fifteen more miles behind her  
They might have split up or they might have capsized  
They may have broke deep and took water  
And all that remains is the faces and the names  
Of the wives and the sons and the daughters

Lake Huron rolls, Superior sings  
In the rooms of her ice-water mansion  
Old Michigan steams like a young man's dreams  
The islands and bays are for sportsmen  
And farther below, Lake Ontario  
Takes in what Lake Erie can send her  
And the iron boats go as the mariners all know  
With the gales of November remembered

In a musty old hall in Detroit they prayed  
In the Maritime Sailors' Cathedral  
The church bell chimed 'til it rang twenty-nine times

For each man on the Edmund Fitzgerald  
The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down  
Of the big lake they call Gitche Gumee  
Superior, they said, never gives up her dead  
When the gales of November come early