

Ben Backstay

Burl Ives

Ben Backstay was a boatswain,
A very jolly boy,
No lad than he more merrily
Could pipe all hands ahoy.
And when unto his summons
We did not well attend,
No lad than he more merrily
Could handle a rope's end.

Singing chip cho, cherry cho,
Fol de riddle ido,
Singing chip cho, cherry cho,
Fol de riddle ido.

It chanced one day our captain,
A very jolly dog,
Served out to all the company
A double share of grog.
Ben Backstay he got tipsy,
Unto his heart's content,
And being half-seas over,
Why overboard he went.

Singing chip cho, cherry cho,
Fol de riddle ido,
Singing chip cho, cherry cho,
Fol de riddle ido.

A shark was on the larboard bow:
Sharks don't on manners stand,
But grapple all they come near,
Just like your sharks on land.
We heaved Ben out some tackling,
Of saving him in hopes;
But the shark he bit his head off,
So he couldn't see the ropes.

Singing chip cho, cherry cho,
Fol de riddle ido,
Singing chip cho, cherry cho,
Fol de riddle ido.

Without his head his ghost appeared
All on the briny lake:
He piped all hands aloft and said;
"Lads, by me warning take:
By drinking grog I lost my life,
So lest my fate you meet,
Why, never mix your liquors, lads,
But always drink them neat."