

Around the Wild Cape Horn

Ralph McTell

I was born a land-bound farm boy and in New England raised
The rippling of the wheat fields, well they were my ocean waves
Each cry and call, each rise and fall, of the crows a-cross the corn
Were seagulls swooping a-cross the bow, of a ship I dreamed I'd sail a-
round Cape Horn

My deck was the dusty farm yard, my mast was the telegraph pole
And the wind blow choir in the telephone wire was the call heard in my soul
And it seemed to have been singing since the day that I was born
I'm gonna take a trip on a sailing ship, all the way around the wild Cape Ho
rn

Well, I found that ship in Hamburg, her name it was Peking
Our skippers name was Captain Jrs, and I'd never met a man like him
He pulled two men out from the sea, by the hair, in a raging storm
And he kept that grip on a sailing ship, all the way around the wild Cape Ho
rn

Well, the cargo weighed five thousand tons, the ship three thousand more
An acre of sail was up aloft, some seventeen storeys tall
And we had a pig, and a scruffy dog and a turkey fed on corn
And willing hands who catch the wind, hauling us around the wild Cape Horn

Well, its four hours on and its four hours off and you sleep in your wet clo
thes
The only dry thing on the ship is the cargo down below
Eleven thousand miles we sailed, nigh on one hundred dawns
Thirty two sails on a heaving ship, pulling us around the wild cape horn

For seventeen days we were becalmed and then Friday the thirteenth
Sixty eight great ships were lost in the storm of the century
But we were swept into the Atlantic, on a sun-lit sparkling morn
The turkey got sick, so we ate him quick, on the way around the wild Cape Ho
rn

We lost two boys at on that voyage, they got thrown overboard
Silence from us down below, no one could put in words
Two empty bunks to mark the space in our young lives to mourn
Voids between all life and death, on the way around the wild Cape Horn

Well, she had us sort of hypnotised, no time to catch our breath
If you want to feel real alive, well you have to flirt with death
Sail close to the harnessed wind, and treat all risks with scorn
A farm boy and an un-
yoked team, ploughed their way around the wild Cape Horn

And mountain waves, like avalanches crashed upon the decks
The screaming winds snapped ropes and spars, and tried to have us wrecked
But she rose and fell through foam and swell, her sails were ripped and torn
Eight thousand tons tossed like a cork, on the way around the wild Cape Horn

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