

White Squall

Stan Rogers

Now it's just my luck to have the watch, with nothing left to do
But watch the deadly waters glide as we roll north to the 'Sioux',
And wonder when they'll turn again and pitch us to the rail
And whirl off one more youngster in the gale.

The kid was so damned eager. It was all so big and new.
You never had to tell him twice, or find him work to do.
And evenings on the mess deck he was always first to sing,
And show us pictures of the girl he'd wed in spring.

But I told that kid a hundred times "Don't take the Lakes for granted.
They go from calm to a hundred knots so fast they seem enchanted."
But tonight some red-eyed Wiarton girl lies staring at the wall,
And her lover's gone into a white squall.

Now it's a thing that us old-timers know. In a sultry summer calm
There comes a blow from nowhere, and it goes off like a bomb.
And a fifteen thousand tonne'r can be thrown upon her beam
While the gale takes all before it with a scream.

The kid was on the hatches, lying staring at the sky.
From where I stood I swear I could see tears fall from his eyes.
So I hadn't the heart to tell him that he should be on a line,
Even on a night so warm and fine.

But I told that kid a hundred times "Don't take the Lakes for granted.
They go from calm to a hundred knots so fast they seem enchanted."
But tonight some red-eyed Wiarton girl lies staring at the wall,
And her lover's gone into a white squall.

When it struck, he sat up with a start. I roared to him, "Get down!"
But for all that he could hear, I could as well not made a sound.
So, I clung there to the stanchions, and I felt my face go pale,
As he crawled hand over hand along the rail.

I could feel her keeling over with the fury of the blow.
I watched the rail go under then, so terrible and slow.
Then, like some great dog she shook herself and roared upright again.
Far over-side. I heard him call my name.

But I told that kid a hundred times "Don't take the Lakes for granted.
They go from calm to a hundred knots so fast they seem enchanted."
But tonight some red-eyed Wiarton girl lies staring at the wall,
And her lover's gone into a white squall.

So it's just my luck to have the watch, with nothing left to do
But watch the deadly waters glide as we roll north to the 'Sioux',
And wonder when they'll turn again and pitch us to the rail
And whirl off one more youngster in the gale.

But I tell these kids a hundred times "Don't take the Lakes for granted.
They go from calm to a hundred knots so fast they seem enchanted."
But tonight some red-eyed Wiarton girl lies staring at the wall,
And her lover's gone into a white squall.