

## The Whaleboat Essex

One moon bright night way out on the sea  
With the stars and the sky all clear  
With our holds all full, to the sound of a gull  
Homeward bound we steered  
A bonus to come, asleep with the rum  
I dreamed a most terrible tale  
And my thoughts went away to some friends far away  
Who like me had gone hunting the whale.

A silence was heard as around went the word  
And the news went man to man  
And those of us working the decks were struck dumb  
By the news from Whaler Town  
Some men grieved, some disbelieved  
Such a fearful a fish was found  
It had taken but two of the lives of the crew  
When the whaler boat Essex went down

*So lads think twice, take my advice  
Don't go to Whaler Town  
Don't hunt the whale, take heed the tale  
How the whale boat Essex went down.*

Their morning broke with a cry 'Theres a whale'  
To your boats be as quick as you like  
And the oars sped along with a chase and a song  
And the harpooneer's strike  
The lance goes in but the whale won't give in  
Each strike makes him more bold  
Till his breath in a rush through his spout he did push  
Made the whalermen's blood run cold

The whale turned around and he made not a sound  
And silence fell on the view  
Then like the devil hell bent, he screamed as he went  
With his evil eye on the crew  
He smashed the ships side with his head and they cried  
Such a sight they'd never seen  
They were all full of fear and they prayed not to die  
As he struck them again and again

Some say it was vengeance but none really knew  
Why those whale men were scattered and slain  
But he smashed with his head till the sea turned red  
And none of the Essex remained  
Some died by his jaw some died by his tail  
And some by the sharks as they raved  
But a few who survived, took to a small boat  
In the hope that they might be saved

The heat of the day and the cold bitter night  
Took its toll on every man  
They knew by the stars they'd gone too far  
Where a boat might rescue them  
No water no bread starvation ahead  
So hungry they were to survive  
They would plunder they said their comrades dead,  
And asked God what he would provide

After weeks some died but some were to live  
By the grace of their comrades alone  
As shipmates one by one fell asleep  
The ungodly butchered their bones  
Till a ship on the wings of an angel it came  
And those who were found to a've survived  
Why they were carried on board clinging to their lives  
With a deathly stare in their eyes

And I couldn't stop thinking of ghosts and bones  
As our ship ploughed home on the sea  
That they were scattered and lost all over the main  
Brought this hard old sailor to tears  
And the old yellow sun, set in the mist  
Made the sea on our bow turn gold  
I swore that I'd not go whaling again  
And go to sea no more.

Words & Music Richard Grainger 2005

