

*THE EDMUND FITZGERALD*

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The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down  
Of the big lake they call Gitchigumi  
Superior, it's said, never gives up her dead  
When the skies of November turn gloomy.  
With a load of iron ore - 26,000 tons more  
Than the EDMUND FITZGERALD weighed empty  
That good ship and crew was a bone to be chewed  
When the gales of November came early

(Chorus)

Oh say a prayer  
For the men of the EDMUND FITZGERALD  
Good men and women, a prayer  
For the crew of the EDMUND FITZGERALD

The ship was the pride of the American side  
Loaded deep at a mill in Wisconsin  
As the big freighters go it was bigger than most  
With a crew and the Captain well seasoned.  
On good voyage terms with a couple of steel firms  
To the port of Detroit they were steering  
But later that night when the ship's bell rang twice  
Could it be the North Wind they'd been feeling?

The wind in the wires made a tattletale sound  
When the waves tore a hole in the railing  
Then every man knew, as the Captain did, too,  
'Twas the witch of November come stealing.  
The sky was like slate and the breakfast was late  
As the gales of November came slashing  
When afternoon came it was all freezing rain  
In the face of a hurricane west wind

When supper time came the old cook came on deck  
Saying "Fellas it's too rough to feed ya"  
At seven p.m. the main hatchway gave in  
He said "Fellas it's been good to know ya"  
The Captain knew then he had water coming in  
And the good ship and crew were in peril  
And when later her lights were no longer in sight  
'Twas the end of the EDMUND FITZGERALD.

Does anyone know where the love of God goes  
When the wind turns the minutes to hours?  
The searchers all say they'd have made Whitefish Bay  
If they'd fifteen more miles behind her.

She might have split up or she might have capsized  
As she ploughed through the white raging waters  
Now all that remains are the faces and the names  
For the wives and the sons and the daughters.

Lake Huron rolls on and Superior sings  
In the ruins 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  
As the iron boats go, the lake mariners know  
To beware of the gales of November

In Detroit the next day many gathered to pray  
In the Maritime Sailors' Cathedral  
The church bell it chimed and rang 29 times  
For each man on the EDMUND FITZGERALD.  
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Of the big lake they call Gitchigumi  
Superior, they say, never gives up her dead  
When the gales of November come early.

- Gordon Lightfoot