

By C. Fox Smith
As sung by Mike Kennedy, 10/20/12

Derelict

"We left her headed in God knows where, in latitude forty-nine,
With a cargo of deals from Puget Sound, and her bow blown off by a mine;
Saw her just as the sun went down and I saw her floating still,
And I hope them deals will let her sink before too long," says Bill.

"It warn't no use to stand by her; she could neither sail nor steer,
With the better part of a thousand miles between her and Cape Clear;
The sea was up to her waterways, and gaining fast below,
And I 'd like to think that she went to her rest as a good ship ought to go.

"For it's bitter hard on a decent ship, look at it like you may,
When she's worked her traverse and done her trick and sailed with the best in her day,
To be floating around like a nine day dance on a Western Ocean swell,
With never a one to hand and reef or ring or strike her bell.

"No one to stand by her halyard pin when it's coming on to blow;
Never the cry of 'Rio Grande' and the watch's stamp and go;
Just the seabirds sitting along the rail and calling the whole day through,
Like the souls of long dead sailormen that used to be her crew.

"No one to watch her binnacle lamps and light the masthead light,
Or scour her planking or scrape her seams when the days are sunny and bright;
No one to sit on her hatch and smoke and yarn when the day is done,
Then say, 'That gear needs reeving new some fine dogwatch, my son!'

"Never a port in all her ports for her to fetch again;
Nothing, only the sea and sky, the sun, the wind and rain;
It's cruel hard on a decent ship, and so I'll tell you true,
That I'd like to think that she went to her rest as a good ship ought to do."