

Based on a poem by Cicely Fox Smith  
As adapted for singing by Mike Kennedy, ©2010

## Poor Old Ship (Regent's Canal Dock)

Her rigging it was once the best a man could find;  
With canvas of the stoutest her lockers they were lined;  
But now from truck to keelson she's stinted shamefully,  
For want of tar and seizing, a sight she is to see –  
*Poor old ship! Poor old ship!*

Her planking was like snow and her brasses they did shine,  
Likewise with sand and canvas they kept her bulwarks fine,  
But now her planks are gaping, her brass a sad disgrace,  
And her teak is daubed and plastered like a painted woman's face –  
*Poor old ship! Poor old ship!*

Her freights were mostly clean ones, her charters they were good,  
She picked them and she chose them and she went just where she would,  
But those good days are gone now and she's had her day,  
And firewood and scrap-iron are all that come her way –  
*Poor old ship! Poor old ship!*

She had shellbacks four-and-twenty that hauled and reefed and furred,  
And shantied up her mud-hook and worked her round the world,  
But now a scant half-dozen is all the chaps she's got,  
And hardly one a seaman in all the blooming lot –  
*Poor old ship! Poor old ship!*

She's sailed the world around over here and everywhere,  
She's served her masters faithfully in weather foul and fair,  
But now old age is in her; it's a shame to see her so;  
She's nothing left to live for; to the breakers let her go –  
*Poor old ship! Poor old ship!*  
*Poor old ship!*

### Notes:

From **Sailor's Delight**, edited by Cicely Fox Smith, published by Methuen & Co.,  
London, UK, ©1931, pp. 102-104.

This poem forms a set with "Age (Millwall Dock)" and the poet suggests that it can be sung to the tune of the traditional forebitter "Poor Old Horse."