

# The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald

## Gordon Lightfoot

The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down  
Of the big lake they called 'gitche gumee'  
The lake, it is said, never gives up her dead  
When the skies of November turn gloomy  
With a load of iron ore twenty-six thousand 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  
The ship was the pride of the American side  
Coming back from some mill in Wisconsin  
As the big freighters go, it was bigger than most  
With a crew and good captain well seasoned  
Concluding some terms with a couple of steel firms  
When they left fully loaded for Cleveland  
And later that night when the ship's bell rang  
Could it be the north wind they'd been feelin'?  
The wind in the wires made a tattle-tale sound  
And a wave broke over the railing  
And every man knew, as the captain did too,  
T'was the witch of November come stealin'  
The dawn came late and the breakfast had to wait  
When the gales of November came slashin'  
When afternoon came it was freezin' rain  
In the face of a hurricane west wind  
When suppertime came, the old cook came on deck sayin'  
Fellas, it's too rough to feed ya  
At seven pm a main hatchway caved in, he said  
Fellas, it's been good t'know ya  
The captain wired in he had water comin' in  
And the good ship and crew was in peril  
And later that night when his lights went outta sight  
Came the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald  
Does any one know where the love of God goes  
When the waves turn the minutes to hours?  
The searches all say they'd have made Whitefish Bay  
If they'd put fifteen more miles behind her  
They might have split up or they might have capsized  
They may have broke deep and took water  
And all that remains is the faces and the names  
Of the wives and the sons and the daughters  
Lake Huron rolls, superior sings  
In the rooms 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  
And the iron boats go as the mariners all know  
With the gales of November remembered In a musty old hall in Detroit they prayed,  
In the maritime sailors' cathedral  
The church bell chimed till it rang twenty-nine times  
For each man on the Edmund Fitzgerald  
The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down  
Of the big lake they call 'gitche gumee'  
Superior, they said, never gives up her dead  
When the gales of November come early

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