Nursery Rhyme Of Innocence And Experience

Natalie Merchant

I had a silver penny
And an apricot tree
And I said to the sailor
On the white quay
Sailor O sailor
Will you bring me
If I give you my penny
And my apricot tree
'A fez from Algeria
An Arab drum to beat
A little gilt sword
And a parakeet?'
And he smiled and he kissed me
As strong as death
And I saw his red tongue
And I felt his sweet breath
You may keep your penny
And your apricot tree
And I'll bring your presents
Back from sea.'
O the ship dipped down
On the rim of the sky
And I waited while three
Long summers went by
Then one steel morning
On the white quay
I saw a grey ship
Come in from sea
Slowly she came
Across the bay

For her flashing rigging
Was shot away
All round her wake
The seabirds cried
And flew in and out
Of the hole in her side
Slowly she came
In the path of the sun

And I heard the sound
Of a distant gun
And a stranger came running
Up to me
From the deck of the ship
And he said, said he
O are you the boy
Who would wait on the quay
With the silver penny
And the apricot tree?
I've a plum-coloured fez
And a drum for thee
And a sword and a parakeet
From over the sea.'
O where is the sailor
With bold red hair?
And what is that volley
On the bright air?
O where are the other
Girls and boys?
And why have you brought me
Children's toys?'

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