

Wellerman

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A song of the sea. This 19th-century folk tale from New Zealand tells the grim story of the 'Billy o' Tea', a whaling ship that harpoons an enormous "right whale". The massive whale drags the crew on an epic, drawn-out tug-of-war. The crew sing in hopeful anticipation of the "Wellerman"—a supply ship sent by the Weller Brothers.

There once was a ship that put to sea, The name of the ship was the Bil - ly O' Tea, The
winds blew up, her bow dipp'd down, Oh blow, my bul - ly boys, blow.
Soon may the Wel - ler - man come To bring us su - gar and tea and rum,
One day when the ton - quin' is done, We'll take our leave and go.



There once was a ship that put to sea,
The name of the ship was the Billy O' Tea,
The winds blew up, her bow dipped down,
Oh blow, my bully boys, blow.

Chorus:

*Soon may the Wellerman come
To bring us sugar and tea and rum,
One day when the tonguing is done,
We'll take our leave and go.*

She'd not been two weeks from shore,
When down on her a right whale bore,
The captain called all hands and swore,
He'd take that whale in tow. *Chorus*

Before the boat had hit the water,
The whale's tail came up and caught her,
All hands to the side, harpooned and fought her,
When she dived down below. *Chorus*

No line was cut, no whale was freed,
The captain's mind was not of greed,
And he belonged to the Whaleman's creed,
She took that ship in tow. *Chorus*

For forty days or even more,
The line went slack then tight once more,
All boats were lost, there were only four,
But still that whale did go. *Chorus*

As far as I've heard, the fight's still on,
The line's not cut, and the whale's not gone,
The Wellerman makes his regular call,
To encourage the captain, crew and all. *Chorus*