

# Stan Rogers, Lock-Keeper

You say, "Well-met again, Lock-keeper!  
We're laden even deeper than the time before,  
Oriental oils and tea brought down from Singapore."  
As we wait for my lock to cycle  
I say, "My wife has given me a son."  
"A son!" you cry, "Is that all that you've done?"

She wears bougainvillea blossoms.  
You pluck 'em from her hair and toss 'em in the tide,  
Sweep her in your arms and carry her inside.  
Her sighs catch on your shoulder;  
Her moonlit eyes grow bold and wiser through her tears  
And I say, "How could you stand to leave her for a year?"

"Then come with me" you say, "to where the Southern Cross  
Rides high upon your shoulder."  
"Come with me!" you cry,  
"Each day you tend this lock, you're one day older,  
While your blood runs colder."  
But that anchor chain's a fetter  
And with it you are tethered to the foam,  
And I wouldn't trade your life for one hour of home.

Sure I'm stuck here on the Seaway  
While you compensate for leeway through the Trades;  
And you shoot the stars to see the miles you've made.  
And you laugh at hearts you've riven,  
But which of these has given us more love of life,  
You, your tropic maids, or me, my wife.

"Then come with me" you say, "to where the Southern Cross  
Rides high upon your shoulder."  
"Ah come with me!" you cry,  
"Each day you tend this lock, you're one day older,  
While your blood runs colder."  
But that anchor chain's a fetter  
And with it you are tethered to the foam,  
And I wouldn't trade your life for one hour of home.  
Ah your anchor chain's a fetter  
And with it you are tethered to the foam,  
And I wouldn't trade your whole life for just one hour of home