

The Decemberists, The Mariner's Revenge Song

We are two mariners
Our ship's sole survivors
In this belly of a whale

Its ribs our ceiling beams
Its guts our carpeting
I guess we have some time to kill

You may not remember me
I was a child of three
And you, a lad of eighteen

But I remember you
And I will relate to you
How our histories interweave

At the time you were
A rake and a roustabout
Spending all your money
On the whores and hounds
Oh oh

You had a charming air
All cheap and debonair
My widowed mother found so sweet

And so she took you in
Her sheets still warm with him
Now filled with filth and foul disease

As time wore on you proved
A debt-ridden drunken mess
Leaving my mother
A poor consumptive wretch
Oh oh

And then you disappeared
Your gambling arrears
The only thing you left behind

And then the magistrate
Reclaimed our small estate
And my poor mother lost her mind

Then one day, in spring
My dear, sweet mother died
But before she did
I took her hand as she, dying, cried:
Oh oh

"Find him, bind him
Tie him to a pole and break
His fingers to splinters
Drag him to a hole until he
Wakes up naked
Clawing at the ceiling
Of his grave"

It took me fifteen years
To swallow all my tears
Among the urchins in the street

Until a priory
Took pity and hired me

To keep their vestry nice and neat

But never once in the employ
Of these holy men
Did I ever, once, turn my mind
From the thought of revenge
Oh oh

One night I overheard
The prior exchanging words
With a penitent whaler from the sea

The captain of his ship
Who matched you toe to tip
Was known for a wanton cruelty

The following day
I shipped to sea
With a privateer

And in the whistle
Of the wind
I could almost hear...
Oh oh

"Find him, bind him
Tie him to a pole and break
His fingers to splinters
Drag him to a hole until he
Wakes up naked
Clawing at the ceiling
Of his grave"

"There is one thing I must say to you
As you sail across the sea
Always, your mother will watch over you
As you avenge this wicked deed"

And then that fateful night
We had you in our sight
After twenty months at sea

Your starboard flank abeam
I was getting my muskets clean
When came this rumbling from beneath

The ocean shook
The sky went black
And the captain quailed

And before us grew
The angry jaws
Of a giant whale

Oh oh
(screaming)
Oh
(screaming)

Don't know how I survived
The crew all was chewed alive
I must have slipped between his teeth

But, oh! What providence!
What divine intelligence!

That you should survive
As well as me

It gives my heart
Great joy
To see your eyes fill with fear

So lean in close
And I will whisper
The last words you'll hear
Oh oh