

# **Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald**

**Music and lyrics ©1976 by 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 true 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 ev'ry man knew, as the captain did too  
'twas 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 t'feed ya."  
At seven P.M. a main hatchway caved in; he said,  
"Fellas, it's bin 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 'is 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 searchers all say they'd have made Whitefish Bay  
if they'd put fifteen more miles behind 'er.  
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 'til 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!"