

# MY BOY WILLIE

*Performed by:* John Joe English

The sailing trade is a weary life,  
Robs fair maids of their hearts delight,  
Cause poor girls to weep and mourn,  
Their true lovers should ne'er return.

My Willie's gone where no tongue can tell,  
In his bosom my heart do dwell,  
'Happy, happy, happy is the girl,' she cried,  
'Keeps her true love by her side.'

The colour of amber was my love's hair,  
Skin as white as the lily fair;  
His ruby lips all thin and fine,  
He oft times pressed them to those of mine.

'O father, father, build me a boat,  
On the ocean I will float;  
The lofty vessels as they sail by,  
I'll enquire for Willie my bold sailor boy.'

She had not long been ploughing the deep,  
When a fleet of Frenchmen she chanced to meet;  
'My Jubal<sup>1</sup> sailors come tell me true,  
My love, Willie, sells on board of you.'

'Oh no, fair maid, he is not here,  
No, fair maid, he's drowned, I fear;  
For the other night as the wind blew high,  
We lost four more and your sailor boy.'

She wrang her hands and tore her hair,  
Just like a maid in deep despair;  
Saying, 'What will I do or will I roam?  
Since my Willie's drowned, I'm quite undone.'

She took her pen, she wrote a song,  
Wrote it wide and wrote it long,  
At every line she'd shed a tear,  
At every verse she'd cry, 'Willie, dear.'

A few days after this fair one died,  
A note was found by her bedside,  
And on this note the lines was wrote,  
'This young sailor my heart is broke.'

---

<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: 'Jubal' is a biblical character referenced in Genesis 4:21 as the 'ancestor of all who played the harp and flute.' The relevance of this reference in the context of this song is unclear. Potentially the word may be 'jovial,' 'noble,' or, as in other variants of this song, 'you sailors all.'

Come dig my grave both long and wide,  
Place a willow tree by my side  
And on my breast a turtle dove  
Satisfy that I died in love.