

Shoals of Herring

Ewan MacColl

With our nets and gear we are fairing,
On the wild and wistful ocean,
It's there on the deep that we harvest and reap, for bread,
As we hunt the bonny shoals of Herring.

Twas a fine and pleasant summer's day,
Out of Yarmouth harbour I was fairing,
As a cabin boy on the sailing lugger,
We were off to hunt the shoals of Herring.

Now the work was hard and the hours were long,
And the treatment surely took some bearing,
There was little kindness and the kicks were many,
As we hunted for the shoals of Herring.

Now we fished the Swarth and the Broken Bank,
I was cook and I'd a quarter sharing,
And I used to sleep standing on my feet,
And I dreamed about the shoals of Herring.

Well we left the Home Ground in the month of dune,
And for Gally shields we soon were bearing,
With a hundred cran of the silver darlings,
We'd taken from the shoals of Herring.

Through the stormy seas and the living gales,
Just to earn your daily bread you're bearing,
From the Dover Straights to the Faeroe Islands,
As you're following the shoals of Herring.

Now you're up deck you're a fisherman,
You can swear and show a manly bearing,
Take your turn up on deck with the other fellows,
As you're following the shoals of Herring.

Night and day we're fairing,
Come winter wind or winter gale,
Sweat or cold, growing up growing old, and dying,
As you hunt the bonny shoals of Herring.