

Caledonia

A sailor and his true love lay down to make their moan
When in by came one of their ain countrymen
Saying “rise up my bonny lassie, make haste and come awa’;
There’s a vessel lying bound for Caledonia.”

“Well,” said the sailor, “are ye willing for to pay
Five hundred guineas before on board ye gae?”
“I’ll pay them plack and farthing, before on board I go
If you’ll take me to my bonny Caledonia.”

“Well,” said the sailor, “her money we will tak,
And when we’re on the sea, we’ll throw her o’er the deck,
Or sell her for a slave, long ere she win awa’,
And she’ll never see her bonny Caledonia.”

“Well,” said the captain, “that will never do
For there are nae slaves sold intae our country noo;
They’d hang us ain and a’, they would hang us, every man
If we sold her for a slave in Caledonia.”

“Well,” said the sailor, “she’s lying down below
She’s bound hand and foot, ready overboard to throw
She’s bound hand and foot, ready overboard to throw
And she’ll never see her bonny Caledonia.”

So the captain away to the fair maid he has gaen
Says “what is the reason you’re lying here sae lang?
And what is the reason you’re lying here at all?
Lass, you’ve paid your passage dear to Caledonia.”

“Oh,” cried the lassie, “oh, and woe is me
That ever I was born such hardships for to see
For the sailor’s got a lassie he likes better far than me
And it causes me to weep for Caledonia.”

So the captain away to the sailor he has gone
He’s ta’en him by the neck and him overboard has thrown
Saying “take this cup of water, though the liquor be but small,
And drink your lassie’s health to Caledonia!”

They've sailed east and they've sailed west
Until they've reached the country that they all loved the best
And the winds they did roar and the seas they did beat
And they've all arrived safe to Caledonia

Well they had not been there but three quarters of the year
When in fine silks and satins he has made her for to wear
And in fine silks and satins he as made her for to go
And she's the captain's wife in Caledonia

Lyrics: traditional Melody: Tony Cuffe

Appears on *River Run Wide*

There are many songs called 'Caledonia', but I like this one best. Happy endings are rare in this tradition.