

NEW BEDFORD'S BRAVE CATALPA
(A True Story)

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NOTE: Chorus is repeated every other stanza.

(1)

Come all you freedom-loving folk
And hear a song from me
It's about a bold New Bedford ship
And her trip far o'er the sea
Her skipper a Yankee through and through
From a town on Buzzards Bay
And to help some Irish rebel boys
He took her south one day

(2)

Catalpa was a sturdy ship
But trim in every line
And just the one to play her part
In this perilous design
George Anthony was the captain's name
New Bedford boys her crew
Says George to his wife "Now don't you fret
If we're gone for a year or two..."

(Chorus)

Sail on you bold Catalpa
My brave New Bedford girl!

(3)

"There's some Irish lads in Australia
I've got to go and see
And if they've had enough down there
They'll be welcome to come home with me
Our good ship's rigged and ready now
But this time not for whale
We'll leave that easy life behind
To get Paddy out of jail!"

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(4)

Catalpa's heading eastwards now
Nantucket far behind
And the reason for their journey
Is on every crewman's mind
But the Captain's always cheerful
And their spirits never low
"Sail on, my boys, for freedom
We've not much more to go!"

(5)

At long last off Fremantle's shore
Old Glory is flying high
Not far inland the prison camp
Where many had been sent to die
A signal sent, then one received
The crew give out a cheer
"Make ready the boat," the Captain cries
The time is nearly here!"

(6)

The whaleboat's down and approaching shore
But a storm is rising fast
The prisoners' courage starts to fail
As the moments hurry past
One, two, three times she's beaten back
Till at last by God she's through
And rides out the night in a howling gale
Like the devil's dream come true

(7)

But daylight's coming closer
And the storm is nearly done
And through the murk Catalpa's seen
With her sails all set to run
A police boat's half a mile away
And armed men clearly seen
With a regimental sergeant
Shouting orders from the Queen

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(8)

The whaleboat's nearly alongside now
But the launch is gaining fast
But Catalpa has her anchor up
All safe aboard at last
"Hold fire!" the British sergeant cries
As Catalpa makes her turn
The Stars and Stripes on her aftermast
"New Bedford" on her stern

(9)

A long nine months, then the good ship's home
Bound up through New York Bay
The Irish boys are all heroes now
And the city theirs today
And the population thrills to hear
The story once again:
"We'd be prisoners still in that awful jail
Without these gallant men!

(10)

"All thanks to you, George Anthony
And your brave New Bedford crew
And bless you, bold Catalpa
For all that you've been through!
You deserve the thanks of every man
Who would learn what cowards lack
May God and good Saint Patrick
Keep the wind e'er at your back!"

Words and music: Bill Black
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