Norfolk Whalers Row My Love Row

Words and music by Harry Robertson, a Scottish-born, Australian seaman, engineer, folk-singer, songwriter, poet and activist.

During the 1950s he served in commercial whaling fleets and wrote a number of songs about his experiences.



The men on the boats strain hard at the oars, As they head for the whale and away from the shores. High in the bow the harpoon man stands, The steel-shafted harpoon held tight in his hands.

It's "ship your oars, lads, and quiet as we go"
The harpoon sinks deep and the blood starts to flow.
Hell-fire and fury break out on the waves,
One flip of his tail will mean watery graves.

At last the whale drags the boat o'er the sea But tires from his efforts the lines to break free. Exhausted at last he floats in the sun Sharp lances complete what the harpoon'd begun.

It's back to the island will be a long row, Should darkness come down then the lanterns will glow. High on the clifftops the islanders stand And watch for the whalemen to return to the land.

With backs nearly broken and blistered hands sore The whalemen at last reach the land's rocky shore. The joy of friends' faces a pleasure to see As they welcome them home with the prize of the sea.