

# Silver Tip

words & music by Robert Rohde

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The life of a sailorman or fisherman has been an attractive ideal for many restless young men, and a source of heartache and complaint for more experienced men of the sea and their wives. The following humorous song, by Seattle singer-songwriter Robert Rohde, tells of his real-life adventure on the rolling sea in the summer of 1969.

Well, I got a-board the Silver Tip, headin' for A-las-ka,  
in the year of 'sixty-nine,  
How was I to know we'd meet dis-as-ter and I'd  
end up in the wa-ter-y brine. Well, it was  
in Se-at-tle that I stepped a-board her,  
straight from the coun-ty jail, And af-ter  
eight long months be-hind those walls, I was  
look-in' kind of pale. Oh, that Silver Tip, she was a

hard luck ship, I know that now for sure.

There were a million ships that made  
that trip, Why'd I have to get a-board her?

Why'd I have to get a-board her?

The musical notation consists of four staves of music in G major. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in a simple, folk-like style. The lyrics are written in a cursive script below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics. The third staff continues the melody and lyrics. The fourth staff concludes the melody and lyrics. Chords are indicated by letters G, C, D, and D7 above the notes.

Well the skipper that year was a man named Chuck, had a first mate, name o' Ray,  
And Ray's woman Babe, she cooked our meals, made a fourth for the pinochle play.  
Bob Mace and I, two cancers who were new to the fishin' scene,  
Knew by the end of the very first day, Ray didn't like men who were green. CHORUS

Ray kept us busy those first few days, tho' there was no work to be done;  
He just took it on himself to see we didn't have no fun.  
And Bob and I worked in the rain, and did we moan and cuss;  
And we nick-named Ray by the second day as Ray the Superfluous. CHORUS

Then on the second night as I did lie in the foc'sle fast asleep,  
The skipper came and called my name and yanked me to my feet.  
Then he shook me up, and called me a pup, and a worthless lackin' lump.  
Then he told me to get my butt upstairs and man that ship's bilge pump.  
Oh that Silver Tip, she was a sinkin' ship, etc. CHORUS

So I was outside pumpin' with all my strength, tryin' to keep that boat afloat,  
When my sidekick Bob, with an awful sob, just fell clean off that boat.  
And I watched him as he went down once, and I watched him go down again,  
Then I recalled three times is all they allow to drownin' men. CHORUS

So I reached out and I grabbed Bob's hand, and I pulled him back on board,  
Do you think that he said thanks to me, no he just thanked the Lord.  
But I didn't have the time right then to mention impropriety,  
Because the Silver Tip she was a-sinkin' low, bein' covered by the sea. CHORUS

So I went back to pump some more, tho' I saw that it was no use,  
Then the skipper yelled for me to go and get that seine skiff loose.  
So I was back there standin' on the stern, tryin' to get those chains undone,  
And we just sank into the sea just like the settin' sun. CHORUS

So I took off a'swimmin' for the cabin roof, seine net floatin' all around,  
With all the clothes that I had on, it was a wonder that I didn't drown.  
But just when I thought that I would drown, someone pulled me from the sea,  
And I knew it was true, if I hadn't saved Bob, he wouldn't be there now savin' me.  
CHORUS Repeat Verse 1