

Tryphina's Extra Hand

On the clipper ship *Tryphina*
Swinging northward from the line
With the trade winds blowing steady
And her flying kites ashine
Five and sixty days from Angier
With her freight of Foochow teas
There a sailor man lay dying
And the words he spoke were these:

Many years I've sailed this packet
And I've come to like her well
And I've not much hope of heaven
And I've not much use for hell
But if be it as they'll let me
By the great hookblock I swear
When the great *Tryphina* wants me
Dead as living I'll be there

*There'll be one more at the haliards
There'll be one more on the yard
Fisting up them thundering courses
When they're frosted good and hard
One more tallyin' at the forebrace
At the waist neck deep in foam
One more hand to sweat the tops'l's up
And sheet t'ga'ns'l's home*

It was off the Western islands
When he smelled the land he died
And they laid a back the main yard
And they tossed him overside
Then they squared their sheets for England
Pulley hauling with a will
But for all they thought they'd left him
He sailed aboard her still

And the chaps as was his shipmates
Went the way as all chaps go
and the folks as was her owners
Sold the old ship long ago
But whoever owned or sold her
And whoever went or came
The *Tryphina's* extra hand

He sailed aboard her just the same

Chorus

And he never signed no articles
He never drewed no pay
He never scoffed no vittles
But by night as well as day
Though you'd never know his coming
And you'd never see him go
He'd be always somewheres handy
When it's coming on a blow

And he'd stand by wheel at lookout
And you'd kind of feel him near
Kind of see him and not see him
Kind of hear him and not hear
And the funny thing about it
Was you somehow couldn't swear
But you'd know it it sure as shootin'
When the extra hand was there

Chorus

And in port when all the chaps had gone
Ashore to take their ease
And left the ship as lonely
And as quiet as you please
Not a blessed soul aboard her
But the galley cat and you
Then you'd hear a sort of something
More than once I've heard it too

Like a feller up aloft there
Puttering around amongst the gear
Lashing here another rat line
Putting on a mousing there
And a-whistling old tunes over
Such as shellbacks used to know
In the good old China tea trade
Many, many years ago

Chorus

Lyrics: C. Fox Smith **Tune: traditional**

Appears on *Loomings*

I first heard this song from Alice Winship, but got this version from my dear friend and bandmate Arthur Davis.