William & Nancy's Parting

John Wesley Harding

Come all you pretty maidens that have a mind to go All along with your lover for to face the daring foe I've a mind to venture where the cannonballs do fly All along with my love I'll go

He says 'my lovely nancy I hope you'll not repine For I must go onboard our noble fleet to join Our orders are to sea my dear and now we must obey And behind me you must stay'

She says 'my lovely william oh don't you leave me here I'll dress me as a seaman and along with you I'll steer Oh let me go along with you your mess mate for to be And I'll fight so manfully'

He says 'my lovely nancy great danger is at sea Perhaps we may be shipwrecked or else be cast away And in the line of battle perhaps you may be slain So behind me you must remain'

'your pretty little fingers they are so long and small You'll think it but hard usage our cable ropes to haul When the winds they do blow high and the billows loudly roar At home you must be on shore'

So now my love has gone abroad as I do tell you plain Kind heaven shall protect him as he's ploughing on the main Protect him from all danger where the cannonballs do fly And send my william home again