

## Old Admirals

Al Stewart

I can well recall the first time I ever put to sea  
It was on the old 'Calcutta' in 1853  
I was just a lad of fourteen years, a midshipman to be  
To make my way in sailing ships of the Royal Navy

By the time that I was twenty-one I'd sailed the world around  
Weathered storms in the China seas with the hatches battened down  
And made my way by starlight off the coast of Newfoundland  
And dined on beer and herrings while the waves blew all around

I live in retirement now  
And through my window comes the sound of seagulls  
And sets my mind remembering  
The evening stars like memories sail far beyond the distant trees  
Way out across the open seas  
I hear them sing

Oh the wooden ships they turned to iron and the iron ships to steel  
And shed their sails like autumn leaves with the turning of the wheel  
And I was given captain's rank and soon took under me  
The proudest ship that ever sailed for queen and country

Ah, the old queen she passed away with the new born century  
And I received my calling up to the admiralty  
The sands ran through the hourglass each day more rapidly  
As we watched the growing of the fleets of High Germany

So at last the Great War blazed  
I waited with the passing days  
The call to arms that never came  
Writing letters

I may be old now in your eyes  
But all my years have made me wise  
You don't see where the danger lies  
Oh call me back, call me back...

But the war it ran its course, they could find no use for me  
And I live in the country now, grandchildren on my knee  
And sometimes think in all this world the saddest thing to be  
Old admirals who feel the wind, and never put to sea

Now just like you I've sailed my dreams like ships across the sea  
And some of them they've come on rocks, and some faced mutiny  
And when they're sunken one by one I'll join that company  
Old admirals who feel the wind, and never put to sea