

# The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald

By Gordon Lightfoot  
Staff Writer

The legend lives on, from the Chippewa on down, of the big lake they call Gitche Gumee.

The lake, it is said, never gives up her dead when the skies of November turn gloomy.

With a load of iron ore - 26,000 tons more than the Edmund Fitzgerald weighed empty - that good ship and true was a bone to be chewed when the gales of November came early.

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The ship was the pride of the American side, coming back from some mill in Wisconsin. As the big freighters go it was bigger than most, with a crew and good captain well seasoned, concluding some terms with a couple of steel firms when they left fully loaded for Cleveland.

And later that night, when the ship's bell rang, could it be the north wind they'd been feeling?

The wind in the wires made a tattletale sound and a wave broke over the railing. And every man knew, as the captain did, too, t'was the witch of November come stealing.

The dawn came late and the breakfast had to wait when the gales of November came slashing. When afternoon came it was freezing rain in the face of a hurricane west wind.

When suppertime came the old cook came on deck, saying *Fellas, it's too rough to feed ya*. At 7 p.m., a main hatchway caved in; he said *Fellas, it's been good to know ya*.

The captain wired in he had water coming in and the good ship and crew was in peril.

And later that night when its lights went out of sight came the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald.

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Does anyone know where the love of God goes when the waves turn the minutes to hours?

The searchers all say they'd have made Whitefish Bay if they'd put 15 more miles behind her.

They might have split up or they might have capsized. They may have broke deep and took water.

And all that remains is the faces and the names of the wives and the sons and the daughters.

Lake Huron rolls, Superior sings in the ruins of her ice water mansion. Old Michigan steams like a young man's dreams; the islands and bays are for sportsmen. And farther below Lake Ontario takes in what Lake Erie can send her.

And the iron boats go as the mariners all know, with the gales of November remembered.

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In a musty old hall in Detroit they prayed in the Maritime Sailors' Cathedral. The church bell chimed 'til it rang 29 times, for each man on the Edmund Fitzgerald.

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Superior, they said, never gives up her dead when the gales of November come early.

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