

Claud W. Somers, 1977

by Janie Meneely and Rob van Sante (ca. 2018)

They said there's no future in Chesapeake gold
When they hauled her out on the rail
But Thompson Wallace had wanted a boat
And the Somers could still carry sail
But the weather turned frigid, the harbor froze hard
The workboats lay idle for weeks
And when the ice broke, with bills to be paid,
Wallace sailed out with the fleet

CHORUS:

But the Bay can be rough as a riot
Shove the wind straight into your bones
And sometimes come hell or high water
The skipjacks don't always come home

The wind started rising, the waves piled high
They were in for one helluva ride
The water was coming too fast for the pump
And the yawl boat engine had died.
A boat heading in said they'd take on the crew
But the men said they'd keep her afloat
Their pride, their gumption, their livelihood—all
Was riding the deck of that boat.

CHORUS

Some call them crazy, Some call them fools
To be out there risking their lives
But money was short and the season near done
And oysters were damn hard to find.
It was a gamble they took and a gamble they lost,
When their workboat was swamped in the waves,
And Wallace was drowned along with his crew
When the skipjack swamped in the Straits.

CHORUS

Thirty bushel of oysters still lay on her deck
When they raised up the Somers again.
The price of an oyster is never enough,
Compared to the lives of those men.
The Somers went down on the 4th day of March
There's plenty remember it well
When the wind boiled the Bay to a frenzy
And Wallace went sailing through Hell

CHORUS

CHORUS