The Lowdown Lonesome Low

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O Captain, O captain, what will you give me
If I sink for you the Turkey Reveille
As she sails in the low-down
    Low-down, low-down
    Sails in the low-down, lonesome low.

Gold and silver, shining so bright
And my fairest daughter will wed you tonight
If you sink her etc.

Then he bared his breast and he swam on the sea
Till he came along by the Turkey Reveille
As she sailed etc.

Some with their cards and some with their dice
And some were taking their best friend's advice
As she rowed etc.
Then he bared his breast and he swam the tide
And bored ten holes in the old ship's side
And she sank etc.

Some with their hats and some with their caps
Were trying to stop them salt-water gaps
As she sailed etc.

Then he bared his breast and he swam in the tide
Until he came along by his own ship's side
As she rolled etc.

Captain, O captain, take me on board
For if you don't you have forfeited your word
As you sail etc.

Sailor boy, sailor boy, don't appeal to me
For you drowned fifty souls when you sank the Reveille
As she sailed etc.
If it wasn't for the love that I have for your men
I would serve you the same as I served them
As you sail etc.

Then he hoisted his sails and away sailed he

And he left the poor sailor boy to drown in the sea
To drown etc.

So he bared his breast and down swam he
He swam till he came to the bottom of the sea
And he drowned in the low-down
    Low-down, low-down
    Drowned in the low-down lonesome low.

From Our Singing Country, John A and Alan Lomax
Child #286

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