



THE WRECK OF THE EDMUND FITZGERALD

Gordon Lightfoot

GORDON LIGHTFOOT

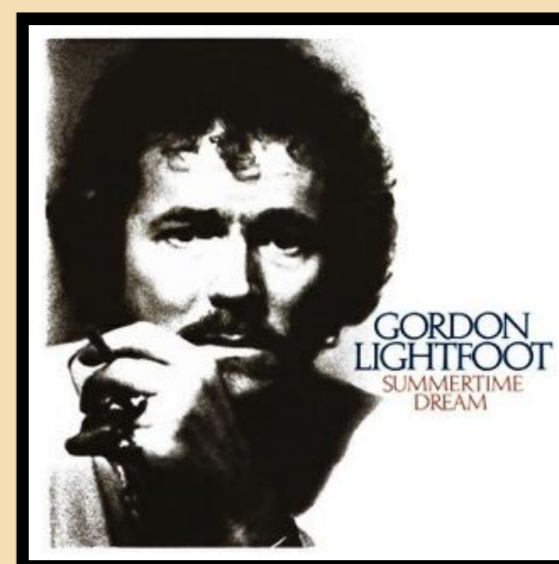
1976

Reprise Records #1369

The second single from the album **SUMMERTIME DREAM**. Chart: #2.
Time - 6:28. Released in U.S.A. August, 1976.

Recorded at Eastern Sound Studios, Toronto, Ont., Canada, December, 1975. Produced by **Lenny Waronker**.
Engineered by **Ken Friesen**.

The song is based on the sinking of the ship, with 29 crew members lost. Lightfoot had already written the melody and chords before the ship's sinking. Seeing the story on the news, he decided on the idea for the song. Then he read the Newsweek magazine article. Gordon got permission from all the freighter USS Edmund Fitzgerald's family members to do the song. He tried to get the story true to the way it happened, but the ship was heading to Detroit, not Cleveland Cleveland fit the lyrics among a few other changes. --- Larry ---



Personnel

Gordon Lightfoot - lead vocals, guitar
Terry Clements - guitar
Richard Haynes - bass
Barry Keane - drums
Gene Martynec - synthesizer

Gordon Lightfoot - 2002 - International Songwriter Association

"It happened right at a time when I was on a roll it was time to write, I had it turned on, no distractions or anything of that kind. [the wreck] came into the picture right in the middle of that roll. A TV item, then the newspaper items, then an item in Newsweek magazine. Then I was reading another news item about it where they spelled the name wrong they spelled Edmund with an o instead of a u and I said: That s it! I m gonna get the name right and also try and get everything in chronological order. So I started working on it. There was a kind of a melody and a chord pattern already [started] for me to try. And it worked out."

"[favorite song] I would have to say so, yes. I have some others that are pretty close but it s the most meaningful; I think it really means a lot to quite a few people. "

Gordon Lightfoot - 2015: Journal Sentinel

"The story of the sinking of the Fitzgerald stayed with me in a funny kind of a way, all by itself. I wasn't forgetting about it. I knew everyone had forgotten about it, but I knew I hadn't forgotten it. (I) had some chords and a melody I had been thinking about and didn't know where to direct it. It is a very good piece of work, I do believe. It's just one of those songs that just stands the test of time and it's about something that, of course, would be forgotten very shortly thereafter, which is one of the reasons I wrote the song in the first place. I didn't want it to be forgotten. (I) tried to be as accurate as possible."

YOU TUBE STUDIO TRACK OFFICIAL VIDEO

YOU TUBE LYRIC VIDEO

YOU TUBE LIVE 1979

The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down
Of the big lake they called '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 twenty-six thousand 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.

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 feelin'?

The wind in the wires made a tattle-tale sound
And a wave broke over the railing
And every man knew, as the captain did too,
T'was the witch of November come stealin'.
The dawn came late and the breakfast had to wait
When the Gales of November came slashin'.
When afternoon came it was freezin' rain
In the face of a hurricane west wind.

When supertime came, the old cook came on deck sayin'.
Fellas, it's too rough to feed ya.
At Seven P.M. a main hatchway caved in, he said
Fellas, it's been good t'know ya
The captain wired in he had water comin' in
And the good ship and crew was in peril.
And later that night when his lights went outta sight
Came the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald.

Does any one know where the love of God goes
When the waves turn the minutes to hours?
The searches all say they'd have made Whitefish Bay
If they'd put fifteen more miles behind her.
They might have split up or they might have capsized;
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 rooms 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.

In a musty old hall in Detroit they prayed,
In the Maritime Sailors' Cathedral.
The church bell chimed till it rang twenty-nine times
For each man on the Edmund Fitzgerald.
The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down
Of the big lake they call 'Gitche Gumee'.
Superior, they said, never gives up her dead
When the gales of November come early!