

Can't ye Dance the Polka

Hugill gives multiple versions pp 279 - 286. Also known as 'New York Girls' and 'Away Susanna'. 'Lime-juice' sailor is an English sailor. 'hair cut short behind' - after the American revolution American sailors adopted short hair as a clear break from the English pigtail style. A 'blood-boat' is a trans-Atlantic packet ship on which hands were worked hard and treated harshly. Roud 486.

As I walked out on Broadway, one evening in July
I met a maid who asked my trade, "A Sailor John" said I

Chorus

*And away, you Santee, my dear Annie
Oh you New York girls, can't ya dance the polka?*

To Tiffany's I took her, I did not mind expense
I bought her two gold earrings, they cost me fifteen cents

Sez she "You lime-juice sailor, now take me home you may."
But when we reached her cottage door, she this to me did say:

"My flashman he's a Yankee, with his hair cut short behind
He wears a pair of long sea boots, he's a Bosun in the Black Ball Line"

"He's homeward bound this evening, and with me he will stay
And so be gone you sailor-boy, you'd best be on your way"

I kissed her hard and proper, afore her flashman came
Then "Fare you well you Bowery girl, I knows yer little game"

I wrapped me glad rags 'round me, and to the docks did steer
I'll never court another maid, I'll stick to me rum and beer

I joined a Yankee blood-boat, and sailed away next morn
Don't ever trust no Bowery gals, yer safer round Cape Horn