

## Johnny Comes Down to Hilo

*Capstan shanty with roots among enslaved workers in the American South. It is attested at least as far back as the mid-19th century. There are many variants so no precise origin. It is related to (and can share verses with) both Hog Eye Man and Shallow Brown. Roud 650.*

*Hilo can be read as a reference to Hilo, Hawaii, which was involved in the 19th century sugar and whaling trades, or to the port city of Ilo, Peru, an important stop in the nitrate trade.*

*Badian = Barbadian*

I never seen the like since I been born  
A great big sailor with his sea boots on

Chorus:

*When Johnny comes down to Hilo  
Poor old man!  
I'll wake her, I'll shake her,  
I'll wake that girl with the blue dress on!  
When Johnny comes down to Hilo  
Poor old man!*

I had a little girl across the sea  
She's a Badian beauty and she says to me  
Chorus

There was an old sailor called Uncle Ned  
He had no hair hanging from his head  
Chorus

Did you ever go down to Mobile Bay  
Where they screws the cotton all through the day  
Chorus

Did you ever see the old plantation boss  
With a long tailed filly and a big black hoss  
Chorus