

Lowlands

According to Hugill, this was originally a pumping song and later used at windlass and capstan. Its 'dead lover' theme definitely originated in Scotland. The tune has a Negro touch about it and likely passed through the shanty mart of the Gulf (of Mexico) Ports. Hugill views it more as a shore-ballad and considers the words to be unusually sentimental for seamen - even so he says it was clearly sung at work on board ship. Roud 681.

I dreamed a dream the other night
Lowlands, lowlands away my John
My love, she came, dressed all in white
Lowlands away

I dreamed my love came in my sleep
Her cheeks were wet, her eyes did weep

She came to me at my bedside
All dressed in white, like some fair bride

And bravely in her bosom fair
A red, red rose, my love did wear

She made no sound, no word she said
And then I knew, my love was dead

Then I awoke to hear the cry
Oh watch on deck, oh watch, ahoy!