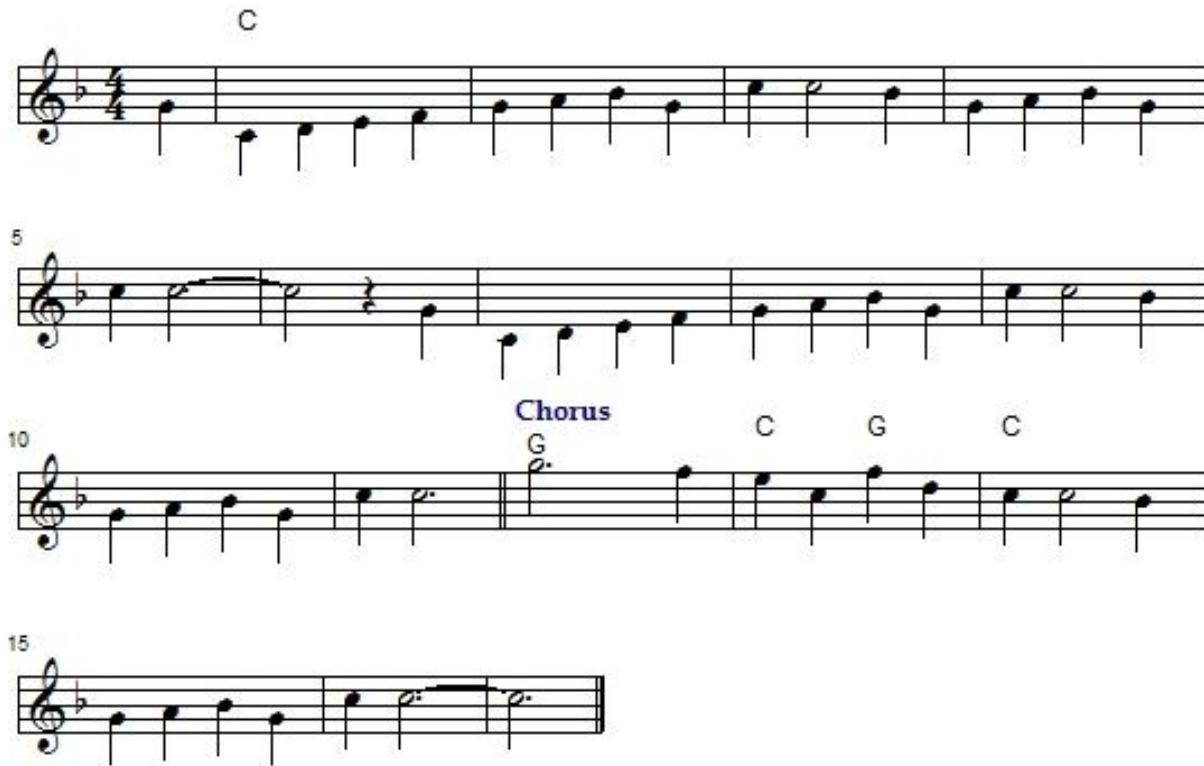# Blood Red Roses

1. Our boots and clothes are all in pawn
       Go down, you blood red roses, Go down.
    And its flamin' drafty 'round Cape Horn,
       Go down, you blood red roses, Go down.
Chorus:
       Oh, you pinks and posies,
       Go down, you blood red roses, Go down.

2. My dear old mother said to me,
    My dearest son, come home from sea.

3. It's 'round Cape Horn we all must go
    'Round Cape Horn in the frost and snow.

4. You've got your advance, and to sea you'll go
    To chase them whales through the frost and snow.

5. It's 'round Cape Horn you've got to go,
    For that is where them whalefish blow.

6. It's growl you may, but go you must,
    If you growl too much your head they'll bust.

7. Just one more pull and that will do
    For we're the boys to kick her through.

A.L. Lloyd sang the halyard shanty "Blood Red Roses" in his uncredited role as lead shantyman in the movie **Moby Dick**, directed by John Huston in 1956. He also recorded it in the same year for his, Ewan MacColl and Harry H. Corbett's album The Singing Sailor. A.L. Lloyd commented in the sleeve notes on his album **A Hundred Years Ago**:

> "One of the best of halyard shanties, undeservedly little known until it became current in the folk song clubs fairly recently."

Stan Hugill thinks it probably started life early in the nineteenth century. The first mention in print is 1879.

The chorus line "Go down, you blood red roses" seems to have been invented by A.L. Lloyd himself in the film **Moby Dick** and later in his recordings. There seems to be no evidence of this line in any published document prior to 1956; e.g. Captain R.C. Adams in **On Board the Rocket** (1879) has a chorus of "Come down, you bunch of roses", and Doerflinger in **Shantymen and Shantyboys** (1951) prints a text and melody for "Come down, you bunch of roses." Stan Hugill seems to have adopted the chorus line from Lloyd too.

It appears in the **Roud Folk Song Index** as #931.

It was also recorded by Peter Bellamy, Louis Killen and others. I think I learned it from The Hardtackers.