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Barret’s Privateers

Oh, the year was 1778, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
A letter of marque came from the king to the scummiest vessel I'd ever seen

God damn them all!
I was told we'd sail the seas for American gold, We'd fire no guns, shed no tears
I'm a broken man on a Halifax pier, The last of Barrett's Privateers

Oh, Elcid Barrett cried the town, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
For twenty good men all fishermen who would make for him the Antelope's crew

The Antelope sloop was a sickening sight, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
She'd a list to the port and her sails in rags and the cook in scuppers with the staggers and the jags

On the King's birthday we put to sea, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
We were 91 days to Montego Bay pumping like madmen all the way

On Christmas Eve in the afternoon, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
With maggots in meat and weedmully bread and watery rum we’d be better of dead

And Barret worked us to the bone, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
An American sloop came into view and Barret cried so hard: ”Heave to!”

He came along side to get onboard, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
Then the Yankee ship open up broadside and I lost one leg and most of me eye

On the 96th day we sailed again, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
When a bloody great Yankee hove in sight with our cracked four pounders we made to fight

The Yankee lay low down with gold, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
She was broad and fat and loose in the stays but to catch her took the Antelope two whole days

Then at length we stood two cables away, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
Our cracked four pounders made an awful din but with one fat ball the Yank stove us in

The Antelope shook and pitched on her side, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
Barrett was smashed like a bowl of eggs and the Maintruck carried off both me legs

So here I lay in my 23rd year, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
It's been six long years since we sailed away and I just made Halifax yesterday

And when they brought me home from sea, I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
No work for one legged jack they say and I cursed Barrett on my dying day

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