Bill Bones' Hornpipe





On a harbour wall, in a sailor hat, Is an old, old man with an old grey cat; And he dreams all day of the time he twirled In a sailor's hornpipe round the world. It was many a weary year ago When he started off on nimble toe For to win the prize of a silver pound, He must dance the world around.

From the harbour wall he began his dance, And he took the road on the way to France, And his old grey cat, for she loved him so, Did a hornpipe to on tail and toe: They danced to the deck of a sailing brig With a hornpipe first and then a jig For to win that prize of a silver pound They must dance the world around.

Then the weeks went by, and the months grew long, And he danced the native tribes among, And the ju-ju men ran away in fear As the twirling man and his cat drew near. To the sandy wastes of Timbuctoo They had sped along in a year or two, For to win that prize of a silver pound They must dance the world around.

But the years went by on the harbour wall And there came no news of the pair at all. And the people sighed, and they said "That's that!" And forgot Bill Bones and his faithful cat. But when twenty years had passed away Came an old, old man and a cat so grey For to win that prize of a silver pound They must dance the world around. Then the Mayor got up, and the Council too, And they quickly asked, "Now who are you, With your ragged clothes and your old black hat And your tarred pig-tail and your dancing cat?" "I'm Billy Bones and my feet are sore And I never want to dance no more, But I've come to claim that silver pound, For I've danced the world around."