

Blackbird Get Up

1. The blackbird get up **Alyah**
And she shake she tail **Alyah**
And the white bird get up **Alyah**
And she do the same **Alyah**

Oh m'donna **Alyah**
Emmalina girl **Alyah**
Oh m'donna **Alyah**
Girl come down with me **Alyah**

2. Oh the white bird stand up **Alyah**
And she shake she tail **Alyah**
And the blackbird stand up **Alyah**
And she do the same **Alyah**

Oh m'donna **Alyah**
Emmalina girl **Alyah**
Oh m'donna **Alyah**
Girl come down with me **Alyah**

3. Well the captain cry out **Alyah**
Wet messy wet **Alyah**
And the front man cry out **Alyah**
Wet messy wet **Alyah**

Oh m'donna **Alyah**
Emmalina girl **Alyah**
Oh m'donna **Alyah**
Girl come down with me **Alyah**

4. Wet messy wet **Alyah**
Oh to the see the rain **Alyah**
Wet messy wet **Alyah**
When the rain come down **Alyah**

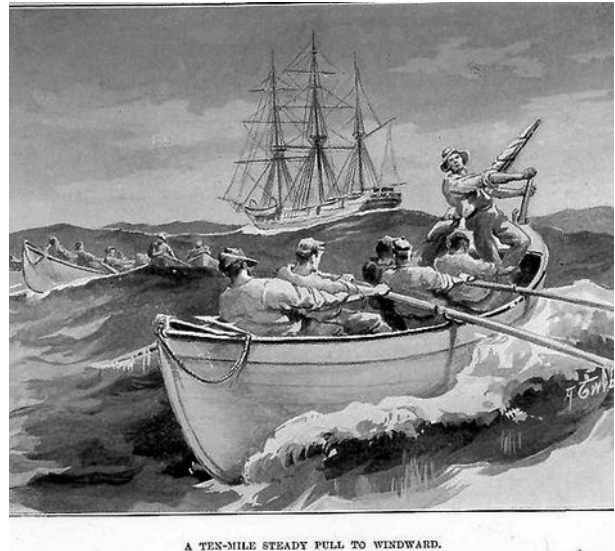
Oh m'donna **Alyah**
Emmalina girl **Alyah**
Oh m'donna **Alyah**
Girl come down with me **Alyah**

5. The blackbird get up **Alyah**
And she shake she tail **Alyah**
And the white bird stand up **Alyah**
And she do the same **Alyah**

Oh m'donna **Alyah**
Emmalina girl **Alyah**
Oh m'donna **Alyah**
Girl come down with me **Alyah**

I cannot find a recording online that sounds like a work song, so we will sing with to a recording from my computer database or a CD.

You might enjoy a demonstration of (uncoordinated) rowing by **Barrouallie Whalem**en at <https://youtu.be/GZiljTlmoNg> and a children's version by **Little Roots** at <youtu.be/MGQRidl49uk>



Frank T Bullen, "A ten-mile steady pull to windward", engraving from *The Cruise of the "Cachalot" Round the World After Sperm Whales*, 1897. via [wikimedia](#)

Notes:

A **rowing song** and hauling shanty from the West Indies. It was used either during off shore **whale hunting** or for hauling the boat out of the water (see below)

Other names: Blackbird get up, Emmalina Girl
Notes on the words

Blackbird - a blackfish - whale!

"**wet**" and "**rain**" may refer to the water the whale's tail flings at them, which could affect the captain and front men first.

Jim Mageean writes in his shanty booklet **Haul Away** (one of three booklets, each coming with a [CD of the shanties](#) and I recommend them highly):

This shanty was collected by Roger D Abrahams from fishermen in Newcastle, Nevis, Plymouth, Tobago and Barouallie, St Vincent (1963-1966). He [Abrahams] said that the men sang it when they were being rained on and also to pull their boats out of the water during the rain. "But mostly we does sing it after a long rowing or coming home late at night and we must pull hard. We does have special songs for that."