

Newer verasion: Can't you dance the Polka?

1. As I walked down the Broadway
One evening in July
I met a maid, she asked me trade
I'm a sailor John says I

**And away, you Santi
My dear Annie
Oh, you New York girls
Can't you dance the polka?**

2. To Tiffany's I took her
I did not mind expense
I bought her two gold earrings
And they cost me fifteen cents.

3. Says she, 'You Limejuice sailor
Now see me home you may'
But when we reached her cottage door
This to me she did say:

4. My flash man he's a Yankee
With his hair cut short behind,
He wears a pair of long sea-boots
And he sails in the Blackball Line.

5. He's homeward bound this evening
And with me he will stay
So get a move on, sailor John
Get cracking on your way.

6. I kissed her hard and proper
Afore her flash man came
Oh get along there, Bowery girl -
I know your little game.

7. I wrapped me glad rags round me
And to the docks did steer
I'll never court another girl
I'll stick to rum and beer.

8. I joined a Yankee blood-boat
And sailed away next morn.
I'll ever court another girl
It's safer off Cape Horn.

**And away, you Santi
My Dear Annie
Oh, you New York girls
can't you dance the polka?**

Hear The **Exmouth Shantymen** sing New York Girls
at youtu.be/x0GRLXTREMc

Notes:

Originally a forebitter, used on **capstan** and **pumps**

Alternative Titles: Away Susanna, Can't you dance the polka?, New York Gals,

Hugill, Stan, 1994, *Shanties from the Seven Seas* writes:

"The older Packet ship words were: **Away you Santi, my dear honey** or Away you Santi, my dear Annie. Sometimes too one would hear '**Away you Johnnie, my dear honey** or '**my fair man**' (Bullen), but in the main '**Santi**' was sung.

"Now no one has ever given a real reason, or meaning, for this word; it just appears to be a meaningless name of some sort."



Rowlandson, Thomas, *Catching an Elephant*, 1812
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Perrot, Jules, 1810-1892,
La polka. Madelle. Grisi & Monsr. 1840
New York Puiblic Library, via [wikimedia commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org).

Earlier Version

(before the polka arrived in the New World)

1. Shanghai'd in San Francisco,
We fetched up in Bombay.
They set us to float in a lease-hold boat
That steered like bale of hay ...

**And away, you Santi,
My dear Annie,
Oh you New York girls!
You love us for our money!**

2. We know the track to Auckland
The light at the Kinsale Head
We've crept close-hauled
while the leadsman bawled
The depths of the Channel bed.

**And away, you Santi,
My dear Annie,
Oh you New York girls!
You love us for our money!**

3. We've panted in the tropics
while the pitch boiled-up on deck
We've saved our hides, little else besides,
From an ice cold North Sea wreck.

We know the quays of Glasgow
The boom of the lone Azores
We've had our grub from a salt-horse tub
Condemned by the Navy stores.

**And away, you Santi,
My dear Annie,
Oh you New York girls!
You love us for our money!**

4. We've drunk our rum in Portland
We've thrashed through the Bering Strait
We "toed the mark" on a Yankee barque
With a hard-case, Down-East mate.

5. We know the streets of Santos
and the river at Saigon.
We've had a glass with a Chinese lass
on a houseboat in Canton.

**And away, you Santi,
My dear Annie,
Oh you New York girls!
You love us for our money!**

6. They'll pay us off in London
Then after a spell ashore
Again we'll ship on a southern trip
In a week or barely more.

7. Goodbye Sal and Lucy,
It's time we were afloat
With a straw-stuffed bed and an aching head
A knife and an oilskin coat.

**And away, you Santi,
My dear Annie,
Oh you New York girls!
You love us for our money!**

6. Sing "Time for us to leave her"
Sing "Bound for the Rio Grande"
As the tug turns back, we'll follow her track
For a last long look at land.

And as the purple disappears
and only the blue is seen,
Commend our bones to Davy Jones
Our souls to Fiddler's Green.

**And away, you Santi,
My dear Annie,
Oh you New York girls!
You love us for our money!**

Notes:

This earlier version is sung by [Tom Lewis](#), on CD:
Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Singer!

Verses from Stan **Hugill**, in *Shanties from the Seven Seas*.

Hugill says the chorus in older packet ships started instead with:

Away you Santi, my dear Honey.