My Johnny Was a Shoemaker

My Johnny Was a Shoemaker

My Johnny was a shoemaker and dearly he loved me
My Johnny was a shoemaker but now he's gone to sea
With pitch and tar to soil his hands
And to sail across the sea, stormy sea
And sail across the stormy sea

His jacket was a deep sky blue and curly was his hair
His jacket was a deep sky blue, it was, I do declare
For to reive the topsails up against the mast
And to sail across the sea, stormy sea
And sail across the stormy sea

Some day he'll be a captain bold with a brave and a gallant crew
Some day he'll be a captain bold with a sword and spyglass too
And when he has a gallant captain's sword
He'll come home and marry me, marry me
He'll come home and marry me

---

recorded by Steeleye Span on "Hark! The Village Wait" (1970)

"This version, taken from Colm O'Lochlainn's excellent 'Irish Stree Ballads (Vol.II) is only one of several, the song having attained wide currency in both Britain and Ireland, even turning up in a Welch version in 4/2 time. The word 'reive' in the second verse, not to be confused with 'reef', means to draw cord through eyelet holes; implying perhaps that Johnny will be doing a new kind of sewing."

MJ