

Tameside Lads

To the editor, Melbourne Argus

Jan'yry 15th 1853

Sir I write to tell of my deliverance
from the depths of the great southern sea
by the good hand of god, and by two brave young men,
fellow passengers as you will see
yes by Thomas Molloy raised in Liverpool port
and James Walker born far from the sea.

On December the 7th in the year that's just gone
the 'Ben Nevis' sailed south of the Cape
bound from Liverpool for South Australia,
for the old world we'd vowed to escape
that morning we rushed to the railing to see
two great sharks break the waves by the bow
It chills me to think as I write these lines down,
what my fate could have easily been now.

About half past twelve as I lunched with my cousin
perched upon the rail near the stern,
the swinging boom caught me just under the ear
and it pitched me straight into the main.
At once in the sea in my great coat and belt
I was lost and confession I made
As I muttered my prayers I had no time to see
two lads dive in to come to my aid.

And just as the water was filling my mouth
I heard a calm voice in my ear,
"keep up your spirits and I'll save you"
and I saw that James Walker was near
"Swim now strong lads and you keep a good heart "
the captain's voice rang o'er the sea
the boat was soon launched and they pulled us aboard
Thomas Molloy, James Walker and me.

As we pulled alongside we all heard the glad cries
of the welcoming crowd on the deck
there were pats and hurrahs, hearty slaps on the back
and my cousin's glad tears on my neck.
the collection soon yielded a handsome £12
for Molloy and James Walker of Denton
I am your obedient servant Sir,
Martin Grady of Dublin.

Well I read this online it made me feel proud
of a lad who was born in this town
and I asked does the spirit of Walker live on?
'cause they tell us that standards are down
but didn't I see, a lad on Guide Lane,
pull a man from a fire, then melt into the crowd
and I smiled with a nod 'cause I think we'd agree
James Walker would be very proud.