

The Wreck Of The Sultana
Cory Branán

Play with the song for timing, there s a good recording of it on Ardent Presents
Cory Branán

Em: 022000
B: x21200
A: 002200

C: x32010
D: 2x023x
G: 320003
F#: 2xx0xx

Em, **B**
Em, **A**
Em, **B**, **Em**

Em

Just after Appomattox

two last bullets and a bell **B**
for the honest and the after **Em** **A**
that the tragic curtain fell **Em** **B** **Em**

There beneath the flood of headlines
and the Mississippi spray
the wreck of the Sultana lies
buried to this day

C **D** **G** **D**
buried to this day, boys

G, **F#** (bend **E** string), **Em**

(Continued for the rest of the song)

The Sultana was a steamboat
she made a New Orleans - Carol run
when a greedy Captain Mason heard
that since the war is done
And the union POWs
are free now, Uncle Sam is paying for their passage home, five dollars every man

Well that s four a head, the Captain said
calculating calm
a dollar per to the officers

should grease the Judas paw

So on a steamboat built to carry
three fifty with crew
twenty three hundred herded
a huddled multitude of purple scars
and leather shadows, midtattered, stitched and torn
What little s always left of glory s human uniform
a human uniform, boys

And when you figure in civilian men, women, children too
there s five hundred more plus the horses, cargo, coal and crew

And so it was and it wasn t the number s that night
you see the boiler needed grave repairs
but the Captain had rushed a patch job
so as not to lose one precious fare

And so, asleep, afloat beneath a sleepy Memphis sky
it came to pass a flame, a flash
and death, she opened wide

And the force of the blast took the fortunate, fast asleep, dreams to dust
but the rest awoke, chest to boat, with the thunder and the thrust

As the smokestacks smashed through the upper decks,
a screaming axe had fell
and a splintered rain of men and flames
pinned in a crush of hell

And diving in, the drowning men, entangled anchor s roar
their frantic limbs heavy in the anesthetic coal

And it was swollen ?that s a silence?, the river reaked her spoils
as the stoney moon stared on and on
where the ?general recoiled?

Until the morning sun rose warm upon the lucky living through
the hell and the highwater maze he d steered them straight into

I ain t saying the Captain s evil
I ain t saying he s any good
just wherever he stood to profit
that s where he stood

He may have stood until the flames forked over
paid dearly what the river pulls down
but all the accounts will tell you
how his body was never found

It was the end of the Sultana
the end of many good men as well
so for now we ll end the story

that couldn't count on time to tell

Though deadlier than the Titanic's legendary fall
I guess it's less romantic, mostly soldiers after all

More dead than Shiloh, Chickamauga
and others lesser known
more anthems send a soldier off
than ever sing him home
than ever sing him home, boys