

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Lifebelt Washed Up on the Shore

Lifebelt Washed Up on the Shore
(Woody Guthrie)

I walked on my beach sand here today
Before the crowd comes down to swim and play;
I see a raggedy bundle colored blue and gray,
'Twas a life belt washed up from the sea.

cho: Just a life belt washed up on the shore:

You've been drifting in the sea a year or more;

Your strings and cords are tied and you move like a man alive

You're just a lifebelt washed up on the shore.

Did they catch you out sleeping on the deck?
Did they trap you down in that engine room?
Did they strangle you in oil or did they burn you in the fire?
You're a lifebelt, you can't hear my words.

Did they get you on the bridge or in the hatch?
Was it London? Gibraltar? or Murmansk?
Pretty warm green South Pacific, or the icy North Atlantic?
But a lifebelt can't say Yes or No.

Was you a G.I. or maybe a Merchant Marine?
Brasshat? Bo'sun? Cook? Or keep machines?
In the dark or in the light, was it daytime, was it night?
You're just a lifebelt, you haven't said a thing.

Did you drift here to see what's going on?
How the big wheel's running little wheels at home?
About a workjob or just whistling at a girly splashing past?
But an empty lifebelt can't talk like a man.

Well, the sun's hot and folks come walking down;
They swim here from a hundred towns around;
I will pull you from the water and I'll drop you on the sand.
You're a lifebelt, you'll mumble not a word.

Lots of swimmers are poor, but a few are rich.
In their swim suits I can't tell you which is which,
Now the life guard picks you up and he drops you in a trash can,

And your folks never did know that you made it home.

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