The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald – Gordon Lightfoot

Strumming Pattern: D, DUDU

To keep song consistency I basically left all chords the same throughout the entire song. The original only adds a quick chord here and there, which I thought might throw you off (it did me) so I just kept the progression a “running” one. My friend and I have played this live a dozen times, and no one ever seems to mind the interpretation. 😊

The entire song is one big verse, but I did add a few breaks between sections. Be SURE to take a breath during these breaks!

Chords Used:

(Asus2 can also be played as 2, 3 like in the Am chord formation)

Asus2  Em  G  D  Asus2

The legend lives on from the Chippewas on down of the big lake they called "Gitche Gumee."

Asus2  Em  G  D  Asus2

The lake, it is said, never gives up her dead when the skies of November turn gloomy.

Asus2  Em  G  D  Asus2

With a load of iron ore twenty-six thousand tons more than the Edmund Fitzgerald weighed empty,
that good ship and true was a bone to be chewed when the "Gales of November" came early.

The ship was the pride of the American side coming back from some mill in Wisconsin.

As the big freighters go, it was bigger than most with a crew and good captain well-seasoned,

concluding some terms with a couple o' steel firms when they left fully loaded for Cleveland.

And later that night when the ship's bell rang, could it be the north wind they'd been feelin'?

Break: (Asus2) – Em – G – D – Asus2 (x2)

The wind in the wires made a tattle-tell sound and a wave broke over the railing.

And ev'ry man knew, as the captain did too 'twas the witch of November come stealin'.

The dawn came late and the breakfast had to wait when the Gales of November came slashin'.

When afternoon came it was freezin' rain in the face of a hurricane west wind.

Break: (Asus2) – Em – G – D – Asus2 (x2)

When suppertime came the old cook came on deck sayin', "Fellas, it's too rough t'feed ya."

At seven P.M. a main hatchway caved in; he said, "Fellas, it's been good t'know ya!"

(*2010 lyric change: At 7 p.m., it grew dark, it was then he said,*)

The captain wired in he had water comin' in and the good ship and crew was in peril.

And later that night when its lights went outta sight came the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald.

Break: (Asus2) – Em – G – D – Asus2 (x2)

Does anyone know where the love of God goes when the waves turn the minutes to hours?

The searchers all say they'd have made Whitefish Bay if they'd put fifteen more miles behind 'er.

They might have split up or they might have capsized; they may have broke deep and took water.
And all that remains is the faces and the names of the wives and the sons and the daughters.

Break: (Asus2) – Em – G – D – Asus2 (x2)

Lake Huron rolls, Superior sings in the rooms of her ice-water mansion.

Old Michigan steams like a young man's dreams; the islands and bays are for sportsmen.

And farther below Lake Ontario takes in what Lake Erie can send her,

And the iron boats go as the mariners all know with the Gales of November remembered.

Break: (Asus2) – Em – G – D – Asus2 (x2)

In a musty old hall in Detroit they prayed, in the "Maritime Sailors' Cathedral."

The church bell chimed 'til it rang twenty-nine times for each man on the Edmund Fitzgerald.

The legend lives on from the Chippewas on down of the big lake they call "Gitche Gumee."

"Superior," they said, "never gives up her dead when the Gales of November come early!"