

Burl Ives

"Frankie and Johnny"

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Burl Ives - Frankie and Johnny

Frankie and Johnny were lovers;
Oh Lordy, how they made love.
Swore to be true to each other,
True as the stars above,
For he was her man,
But he done her wrong.

Frankie was a good girl,
Most everybody knows.
She gave a hundred dollars
To Johnny for a suit of clothes,
'Cause he was her man,
But he done her wrong.

Frankie worked in a crib-joint
Behind a grocery store.
She gave all her money to Johnny;
He spent it on high-tone whores.
God damn his soul.
He done her wrong.

Frankie was a fucky hussy,
That's what all the pimps said,
And they kept her so damn busy,
She never got out of bed.
But he done her wrong.
God damn his soul.

Frankie she knowed her business,
Frankie went to the front door.
She hung out a sign on the door:
She rang the whorehouse bell.

"Fresh fish cost you a dollar here,
"Stand back you pimps and whores

Fancy fucking cost ten cents more."
Or I'll blow you straight to hell.

He was her man.
I'm hunting my man.
He done her wrong.
Who's doin' me wrong."

Frankie went looking for Johnny.
Frankie drew back her kimono,
She hung out a sign on the door:
Pulled out her big forty-four.

"No more fish for sale now,
Rooty-toot-toot, three times she shoot,
Go find you another whore."
Left him lyin' on that whorehouse floor.
He was her man.
She shot her man
But he done her wrong.
'Cause he done her wrong.

Frankie went down Fourth Street.
"Roll me over, Frankie,
She ordered a glass of beer,
Roll me over slow.
Said to the big bartender man,
A bullet got me in my right side,
"Has my ever-lovin' man been here?"
Oh God, it hurts me so.
God damn his soul.
You killed your man
He done her wrong.
'Cause I done you wrong."

"I couldn't tell you no story.
Frankie ran back to her crib-joint.
I couldn't tell you no lie.
She fell across the bed,
I saw your Johnny an hour ago
Saying, "Lord, oh Lord,
I've shot my man,
With a whore called Alice Ely.
I've shot my Johnny dead.
God damn his soul,
He was my man.
He was doin' you wrong."
God damn his soul."

Frankie ran back to her crib-joint,
Three little pieces of crepe
Fixin' to do him some harm.
Hanging on the crib-joint door
She took out a bindle of horse

Signifies that Johnny
And shot it right up her arm.
Will never be a pimp no more.
God damn his soul.
God damn his soul.
He was doing her wrong.
He done her wrong.

Frankie put on her kimono;
"Bring out your rubber-tired buggy.
This time it wasn't for fun
Bring out your rubber-tired hack.
'Cause right underneath it
I'm taking my man to the graveyard;
Was a great big forty-four gun.
I ain't gonna bring him back.
God damn his soul.
He was my man
He done her wrong.
But he done me wrong."

She ran along Fish Alley,
They brought a rubber-tired buggy,
Looked in a window so high,
And brought out a rubber-tired hack.
Saw her lovin' Johnny
Thirteen pimps went to the cemetery

Finger-fucking Alice Ely.
But only twelve of them came back.
He was doing her wrong.
He's dead and gone,
God damn his soul.
He was doing her wrong.

Frankie went out to the graveyard,
Sorry as she could be,
Ridin' behind a whorehouse band
Playin' "Nearer My God to Thee."
He was her man.
He was doing her wrong.

Frankie stood up in the courtroom.
"I'm not tellin' no sass.
I didn't shoot Johnny in the first degree.
I shot him in his big black ass.
He was my man.
He was doin' me wrong."

The judge said, "Stand up, Frankie.
Stand up and dry your tears.

You know murder's a hangin' crime
But I'll give you ninety-nine years.
He was your man.
He was doin' you wrong."

The last time I seen Frankie
She was ridin' on that train
Takin' her to the jail house,
Never bring her back again.
He was her man.
God damn his soul.

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