

## **Joni Mitchell**

### **"The Magdalene Laundries"**

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#### MAGDALENE LAUNDRIES

I was an unmarried girl  
I'd just turned twenty-seven  
When they sent me to the sisters  
For the way men looked at me  
Branded as a jezebel  
I knew I was not bound for Heaven  
I'd be cast in shame  
Into the Magdalene laundries

Most girls come here pregnant  
Some by their own fathers  
Bridget got that belly  
By her parish priest  
We're trying to get things white as snow  
All of us woe-begotten-daughters  
In the streaming stains  
Of the Magdalene laundries

Prostitutes and destitutes  
And temptresses like me--  
Fallen women--  
Sentenced into dreamless drudgery ...  
Why do they call this heartless place  
Our Lady of Charity?  
Oh charity!

These bloodless brides of Jesus  
If they had just once glimpsed their groom  
Then they'd know, and they'd drop the stones  
Concealed behind their rosaries  
They wilt the grass they walk upon  
They leech the light out of a room  
They'd like to drive us down the drain  
At the Magdalene laundries

Peg O'Connell died today  
She was a cheeky girl  
A flirt  
They just stuffed her in a hole!

Surely to God you'd think at least some bells should  
ring!  
One day I'm going to die here too  
And they'll plant me in the dirt  
Like some lame bulb  
That never blooms come any spring  
Not any spring  
No, not any spring  
Not any spring

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