

Laura Cantrell

"Poor Ellen Smith"

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Come all you people my story to hear
What happened to me in June of last year
Oh, its poor Ellen Smith, how was she found?
Shot through the heart, lying dead on the ground

Its true I'm in jail a prisoner now
God is here with me and hears every vow
So I do promise the truth to relate
I'll tell you all that I know of Ellen's sad fate

I saw her on Monday before that sad day
Found her body lying and took it away
That she had been murdered never entered my mind
Till a bullet through the heart they happened to find

Who is so cruel, so heartless, so base
To murder my poor Ellen in such a lonesome place?
I seen her laid out so still and so cold
I heard the wild stories the witnesses told

I choked back the tears as the people all said
"It was you Peter Degraph, shot our Ellen Smith dead"

Ellen lies sleeping with her hand on her breast
The bloodhounds and the sheriff won't give me no rest

They got their Winchesters and hunted me down
I stole away to Mt. Airy town
I laid off a year and I prayed the whole time
The man could be found what committed the crime

I prayed I'd come back and my character save
But the flowers faded round poor Ellen's grave
So I came back to Winston my trial to stand
I'll live or I'll die as the law might command

Ellen lies sleeping in that lonesome churchyard
I stare through the bars, God knows it's hard
I know they will hang me at least if they can
But I swear to you, I'll die as an innocent man

My soul will be free when I stand at the bar
Where God tries his cross, then there like a star
That shines in the night will my innocence shine
And I'll make my appeal to the justice of time

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