

## **Alison Krauss**

### **"Bonita and Bill Butler"**

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I grew up in the scantling yards of Wheeling West  
Virginia  
A wheelhouse cub looking for an open door  
In the packet ways a Sweeney wed the keel of my  
Bonita  
Just two months from her timbers til she moored  
I paid the fare in billet on her maiden voyage to  
Vicksburg  
And talked my way to hand the tiller on the course  
In her planks I carved a notch and sealed the vow "Be  
my Bonita"  
And her dowry was my life between the shores

I was born with rouging ways, and she steered me like  
a woman  
From the port calls and the bawds that lead me stray  
The calliope serenades, made the old towns come  
running  
And the boys would gamble shards to pull her chains  
The striker's boast would fain me loss, about the  
wrecks the shoals were keeping  
And how the old girl's got poor Billy's ransom saved

On the lake at Bistineau, she set the wharf at Dixie  
With a thousand bales of cotton on her main  
As the great raft disappeared, the watermark went  
sinking  
And she was stuck right hard, a listing on the bank  
With the furnace still a blaze, I stood my last upon her  
Then climbed the prow and took a landsman's trade  
"A derelict now Milady" said the watch log I've  
concorded  
"Have the bosun sound us eight bells for the change"

Cause I was born with rouging ways, and she steered  
me like a woman  
From the port calls and the bawds that lead me stray  
The calliope serenades, made the old towns come  
running  
And the boys would gamble shards to pull her chains  
And I would take to wider walks, so the gin I stopped a  
drinking

At three scores aloft this crooked frame  
The striker's boast would fain me loss, about the  
wrecks the shoals were keeping  
And how the old girl's got poor Billy's ransom saved

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