

The Incredible String Band

"Pictures in a mirror"

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Deep in the hollow jail
Sleeps Lord Randall
The mixed voices speak of bread
And of sheets that were scarlet
and blue are at his head
His heart like a cat drowns in a well
He thinks of all the girls he will not love
He thinks not of the future or of the past
Blue lightning spikes the hills above the sea
Where Kasa's ship sets
sail for otherwhere

There stands the chief with
gold on his hair
Two fingers thick each link of coiled ore
Speaks to his white skinned
wife she answers not
He hurls his question angry to the gulls
His wife strikes her mouth
with a skull like sound
The bleeding image of her loss
revolves above her mind
With every line in its design
an accusing eye
That pierces Kasa's soul

The slaves row on beneath
the dragon flag
His heart recoils recall his red-haired son
Beneath the burning walls
that he razed down
His wife and he speak not
as wine is brought
A cup that seethes like the
black blood of wolves
His wife's dagger is hidden in her dress
He drinks joyless to a dark sleep

The gaoler bangs the iron door
Lord Randall wakes in pain
He shakes his shackles

in the beaten gloom
The blood of his wounds is hard as coal

The gaoler leads him out
upon the blinding bright stair
He feels uneven turf beneath his feet
The priest intones, the sword
falls on his neck
The pain is boiling cold

They lay him in the tomb
at the break of day
They close the earthen door
upon his clay
The birds are plucking worms
from the ground

Their feathers grey as mist
on a cloudy morn
Foresters burn branches
from the sleeping trees
The white sun turns to stone

His mother lies in her labor
Nine days long
She called on Saint Bridget in her time
I looked out on the room of my birth
With hangings rich of
many strange designs

Nobles stand with their wine
cups in the room
Saluting me and she the King's queen
Already I am forgetting who I am
Already I've forgotten who I've been

My mother lifts me up
to her huge soft breast
Her nipple like a berry both
hard and brown
Her eyes look on me like waves of the sea
And with small lips
the yellow milk I draw.

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