

Robbie Fulks

"South richmond girl"

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"Weep not for my life," said the prisoner
As he stood in the jail cell alone.
"For tonight when the black hood drops o'er me
My troubles will finally have flown
It's a long line of sorrow I'm leaving
It's a dark path I walked in this world
Since I left a sweet one who loved me
For the charms of a south Richmond girl.

As a young man of 20 I wandered
One night to the south end of town
In the pale amber glow she was standing
Like a diamond that heaven dropped down
In her face was a promise unspoken
In her arms all my strength overcome
In the morning I married that stranger
Never knowing the wrong I had done.

Oh, the north wind blew hard that December
And the cold streets of Richmond lay bare
But the child she bore me that winter
Seemed to answer my weary heart's prayers
And I swore as I pressed him against me
No storm could the heavens unfurl
That would e'er could the life of my baby
Or his mother, my south Richmond girl.

So from each early dawn I did labor
For the little my two hands could earn
But the more that my Richmond girl needed
The later each night I'd return
When the sawmill one Friday closed early
I ran home and threw the door wide
Just to see my baby a-crying
And a man lying there with my bride.

Now, the law's ironbound in Virginia
But the wheels of its justice roll slow
20 years have I laid in this prison
Now to my reward I must go."
Then the prisoner's grey head bowed in silence

And the hand that had killed with no fear
Reached out through the steel bars between them
There to rest on a shoulder so dear.

As the touch he but dimly remembered
The tears filled the younger man's eyes
For his dream of the past was illusions
And his memories of home only lies
And he knew from this moment forever
That he'd walk all alone through the world
For the mother he'd loved was no angel
But a false-hearted south Richmond girl.

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