

## Ruby Jewel Was Here

Allison Moorer

In nineteen and double-aught  
A harlot who was hot to trot  
Gave a fine little bijou to the world  
With a blacksmith for a makeshift doc  
In a cathouse far from camelot  
Her gold mine brought to bed a baby girl  
When the child screamed from life's first slap  
The bawd said kid get used to that  
You'll never meet a day that isn't cruel  
Then she wrapped her babe in a petticoat  
Grabbed a bottle and made a toast  
Here's to my gorgeous bastard ruby jewel  
And the man at the piano played a tune  
And everybody sang and danced in the saloon  
Except ruby, no not ruby, ruby jewel  
Reared among the guttersnipe  
While her mama puffed the chinese pipe  
The salad days for ruby didn't last  
Forced to work and pay her dues  
Inside that poor man's moulin rouge  
The snot-nosed kid had to grow up fast  
Night and day she'd toil and sweat  
While brothel patrons placed their bets  
On who would be the first to break her in  
Then one night the madam screams  
Ruby get to room thirteen  
There's someone there who thinks you're quite a gem  
And the man at the piano played a tune  
And everybody sang and danced in the saloon  
Except ruby no not ruby ruby jewel  
In done up hair and a borrowed dress  
She climbed the stares scared to death  
Said a prayer and tip-toed through the door  
But on deaf ears her prayer fell  
Cause through her tears she stared at hell  
Standing there in nothing but his drawers  
She recognized the whiskered chin  
Bloodshot eyes and foul-mouthed grin  
He was the man who wore the silver star  
She tried to turn around and run  
But he pulled out his big six gun  
And said whore you won't get very far  
And the man at the piano played a tune  
And everybody sang and danced in the saloon  
Except ruby, no not ruby, ruby jewel  
Ruby jewel woke up in bed  
A crimson pool between her legs  
Naked as the day that she was born  
But lying there next to him  
Made her wish she hadn't been  
If this was all that living had in store  
Making sure he was asleep  
She quietly got to her feet  
Found his gun and aimed it 'tween his eyes  
She kept it there 'til he came to  
So he could stare down the barrel too  
Pulled the trigger once and watched him die

And the man at the piano played a tune  
And everybody sang and danced in the saloon  
Except ruby no not ruby ruby jewel  
On a rainy night in nineteen-twelve  
Locked inside the town's new jail  
Ruby carved a message in the stone  
When morning came hacks led her out  
In ankle chains right through the crowd  
Who waited in the mud to watch the show  
They walked her up the gallows steps  
But the rope around her neck  
Dropped the trap as all the watchers cheered  
But on the wall of her cell  
In a tiny scrawl and misspelled  
Were the words ruby jewel was here  
And the man at the piano played a tune  
And everybody sang and danced in the saloon  
Except ruby, no not ruby, ruby jewel