

San Francisco Mabel Joy

Joan Baez

Lord his Daddy was an honest man
Just a red dirt Georgia farmer
And his momma lived her short life
Having kids and baling hay
He had fifteen years
And he ached inside to wander
So he jumped a freight at Waycross
And wound up in LA

The cold nights had no pity
On that Waycross, Georgia farm boy
Most days he went hungry
And then the summer came
He met a girl known on the strip
As San Francisco's Mabel Joy
Destitution's child, born of an LA
Street called "Shame"

Growing up came quietly
In the arms of Mabel Joy
Laughter found their mornings
Brought a meaning to his life
And the night before she left
Sleep came and left that Waycross, country boy
With dreams of Georgia cotton
And a California wife

Sunday morning found him standing
'neath the red light at her door
When a right cross sent him reeling
Put him face down on the floor
And in place of his Mabel Joy
He found a merchant mad marine
Who growled, "Your Georgia neck is red
But Sonny you're still green"

He turned twenty-one
In a grey rock federal prison
The old judge had no mercy
On that Waycross, country boy
Staring at those four grey walls
In silence he would listen
To the midnight freight he knew would take him
Back to Mabel Joy

Sunday morning found him lying
'neath the red light at her door
With a bullet in his side
He cried "Have you seen Mabel Joy!"
"Stunned and shaken someone said
Son, she don't live here no more
No, she left this house four years today
They say she's looking for...
Some Georgia farm boy