

Mickey Newbury, San Francisco Mabel Joy

Lord, his daddy was an honest man, just a red dirt Georgia farmer
His momma lived her short life having kids and baling hay
He had fifteen years and an ache inside to wander
So he hopped a freight at Waycross and wound up in L.A.

Well the cold nights had no pity on that Waycross Georgia farm boy
Most days he went hungry, then the summer came
He met a girl known on the strip, San Francisco's Mabel Joy
Destitution's child born on an L.A. street called Shame

Growing up came quietly in the arms of Mabel Joy
Laughter found their mornings to be the meaning to his life
Now 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 standin 'neath the red light at her door
A right cross sent him reeling, put him face down on the floor
In place of Mabel Joy he found a merchant mad marine
Who growled, "Your Georgia neck is red but Sonny, you're still green"

So he turned twenty-one in a gray rock federal prison
That old judge had no mercy for that Waycross Georgia boy
Staring at those four gray walls in silence, learning he would listen
To that midnight freight he knew could take him back to Mabel Joy

Sunday morning found him standing '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
She left this house four years today, they say she's looking for some Gergia farm boy"