

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Blue Velvet Band

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In that city of beauty and fashion,
In Frisco I first saw the light;
And the numerous adventures and frolics
That live in my memory tonight.

I was walking the streets of old Frisco,
The hour was just turning nine;
When I chanced on a girl, tall and slender
On the corner of Kearney and Pine.

Her face was a vision of beauty,
Her eyes, they seemed to expand.
And her hair it was long, rich and golden
Entwined in a blue velvet band.

To a place where they served us strong liquor,
She invited me with a sweet smile.
She seemed so refined, gay and charming
That I thought I would tarry awhile.

She took me back to her apartment,
It was up on the third floor above;
And I thought myself truly in heaven
As I looked at this goddess of love.

But what struck me most was an object
Designed by an artistic hand,
'Twas the costly layout of a hop-fiend!
And the fiend was my blue velvet band.

On a pile of fine satins and pillows,
She reclined, I declined on the floor,
Then we both hit the pipe and I slumbered,
I pondered it over and o'er.

'Tis months since the craven arm grasped me;
And in bliss did my life slip away.
From opium, to "dipping" and thieving
She artfully led day by day.

One evening, coming home wet and weary
With the swag from a jewelry store;

I heard the soft voice of my loved one
As I quietly opened the door.

"If you'll give me a clue to convict him,"
Said a stranger, in tones soft and bland,
"You'll then prove to me that you love me."
"It's a go," said my blue velvet band.

Ah!, How my heart then filled with anger,
At this woman, so fair false and vile,
And the thought that I once truly loved her
Forced my lips to a sad, bitter smile.

All ill-gotten gains we had squandered
And my life, it was hers to command;
Deserted and left for another ---
Could this be my blue velvet band?

What happened to me I will tell you.
I was ditched for a desperate crime.
For during that jewelry store hold-up
A man was shot down in his prime.

As a convict of hard reputation,
Ten years of hard grind did I land;
And I often recalled all the pleasures
I had with my blue velvet band.

Many months have gone by since this happened,
And the story belongs to the past.
I forgave her, but just retribution
Claimed this fair but false one at last.

She slowly sank lower and lower,
Downward through life's shifting sands;
Till finally she died in a hop-joint
The girl in the blue velvet band.

Now when I get out I will hasten
To live honest in some other land,
For I'm bidding farewell to old Frisco
And the grave of the blue velvet band.

note: I first heard this from an old (1940s) Montana Slim
record, in a shortened form. This is a paste-up of fragments from
a bunch of sources: a more complete (!) version exists in Shay's
More Pious Friends and Drunken Companions. This is an earlier, or
later, version of Black Velvet Band (BLAKVEL). RG

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