

C
Frankie and Johnny were sweethearts,

G7
Oh, Lord, how they did love

F
Swore to be true to each other,

C
True as the stars above

G7
He was her man

C G7
He wouldn't do her wrong

Frankie went down to the corner,
Just for a bucket of beer

She says, "Mister Bartender,
Has my loving Johnny been here,

He is my man,

He wouldn't do me wrong"

I don't want to cause you no trouble,
Ain't gonna tell you no lies,

I saw your lover an hour ago
With a girl namd Nellie Bly,

He was your man,

But he's doing you wrong

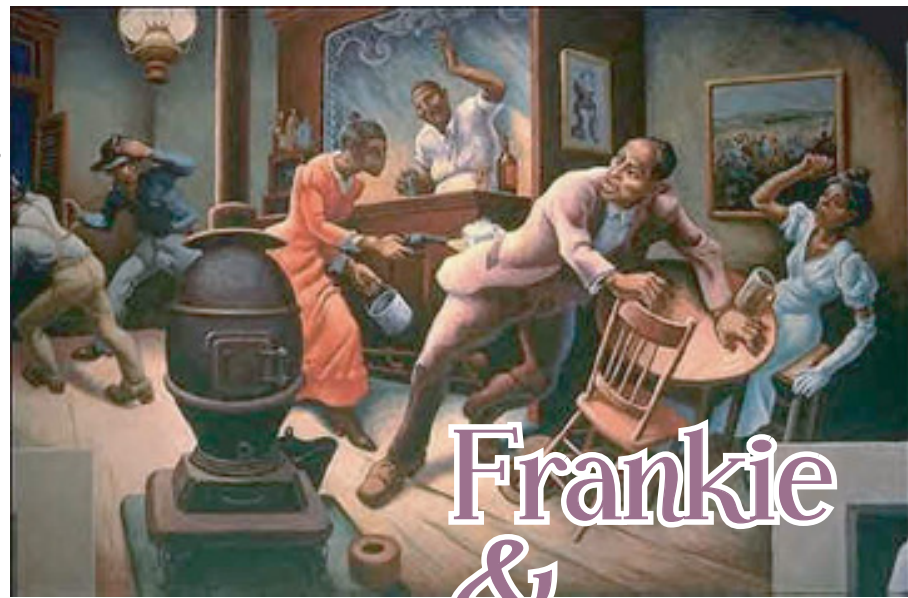
Frankie looked over the transom,
She saw to her surprise,

There on a cot sat Johnny
Making love to Nellie Bly

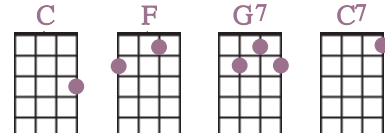
"He is my man
and he's doing me wrong"

Frankie drew back her kimona
She took out a little forty-four
Root-to-toot, three time she shoot
Right through that hardwood door,
She shot her man,

He was doing her wrong



Frankie & Johnny



Bring out your rubber-tired hearses,
Bring out your rubber-tired hacks
I'm taking my man to the graveyard
But I ain't gonna bring him back,
Lord, he was my man
And he done me wrong

Bring out a thousand policemen,
Bring 'em around today
To lock me down in the dungeon cell
And throw that key away,
I shot my man
He was doing me wrong

Frankie said to the warden,
"What are they going to do?"
The warden, he said to Frankie,
"It's electric chair for you
'Cause you shot your man,
he was doing you wrong"

This story has no moral,
This story has no end
This story just goes to show
That there ain't no good in men,
He was her man
And he done her wrong

"If America has a classical gutter song, it is the one that tells of Frankie and her man. Josie, Sadie, Lillie, Annie, are a few of her aliases; she has many. One man showed me sixteen Frankie songs, all having the same story though a few are located in the back country and in bayous instead of the big city. Another fellow has 110 Frankie songs and is still picking up new ones. The Frankie and Albert song was common along the Mississippi River and among railroad men of the Middle West as early as 1888. It is a simple and mournful air, of the short and simple annals of the poor. The Frankie and Johnny song is of later development, with notes of violence and flashes of exasperation. The Frankie Blues came still later, and with its "blue" notes is, of course, "meaner" as a song. In many colleges are groups who sing Frankie songs in ragtime manner, with lackadaisical verses. It may be said, that the Frankie songs, at best, are an American parallel of certain European ballads of low life, that are rendered by important musical artists from the Continent for enthusiastic audiences in Carnegie Hall, New York, or Orchestra Hall, Chicago. Some day, perhaps, we may arrive at a better common understanding of our own art resources and how to use them. While the Frankie story deals with crime, violence, murder, adultery, its percentage in these respects is a good deal less than in the average grand opera."

.....Carl Sandburg