

LOREENA MCKENNITT

From the Quinlan Road recording *Elemental*

BANKS OF CLAUDY

Words and music traditional, arranged and adapted by Loreena McKennitt

As I walked out one morning
All in the month of May
Down by a flowery garden
I carelessly did stray

I overheard a young maid
In sorrow did complain
All for her absent lover
Who ploughs the raging main.

I boldly stepped up to her
And put her in surprise
I know she did not know me
I being in disguise.

I says, "Me charming creature
My joy, my heart's delight,
How far have you to travel
This dark and dreary night?"

"I'm in search of a faithless young man
Johnny is his name
And along the banks of Claudy
I'm told he does remain."

"This is the banks of Claudy,
Fair maid, where you stand
But don't depend on Johnny
For he's a false young man.

"Oh, don't depend on Johnny
For he'll not meet you here
But tarry with me in yon green woods
No danger need you fear.

"Oh, it's six long weeks or better
Since Johnny left the shore
He's crossing the wild ocean
Where the foam and the billows roar.

"He's crossing the wild ocean
For honour and for fame
But this I've heard, the ship was wrecked

All on the coast of Spain ."

Oh it's when she heard this dreadful news
She flew into despair
By the wringing of her milk-white hands
And the tearing of her hair.

Saying, "If Johnny he is drowned
No man on earth I'll take
But through lonesome groves and valleys
I'll wander for his sake."

Oh it's when he saw her loyalty
No longer could he stand
He flew into her arms saying,
"Betsy, I'm the man."

Saying, "Betsy, I'm the young man
The cause of all your pain
But since we've met on Claudy banks
We'll never part again."

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