Poor Boy

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When I went down to the river, poor boy,
To see the ships go by;
My sweetheart stood or the deck of one,
Where she waved to me goodbye.

cho: Bow down* your head and cry, poor boy, (*or Hang down)
Bow down your head and cry;
Stop thinking about that woman you love
Bow down your head and cry

I followed her for months and months,
She offered me her hand,
We were about to be married, when
She ran off with a gamblin' man.

He came at me with a big jack-knife
I went for him with lead,
And when the fight was over, poor boy,
He lay on the ground cold and dead.

They took me to the big jail-house,
The months and months rolled by;
The jury found me guilty, poor boy.
And the judge said, "You must die."

"Oh do you bring me silver, poor boy,
or do you bring me gold ?"
"I bring you neither." said the man,
"I bring you a hangman's fold."

"'Oh, do you bring me pardon, poor boy,
To turn me a-loose?"
"I bring you nothing," said the man,
"Except a hangman's noose."

And yet they call this justice, poor boy.
Then justice let it be!
I only killed a man who was
A-flxin' to kill me.

Recorded by Ives, Cisco Houston
Note: other versions known as Coon-Can Game.

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