

Jacob's Ladder

About the song: Jacob's Ladder was inspired by a women named La Sharon, whom I met while I was singing in a Gospel choir at my former parish in Rochester, New York. Her voice was rich and resonant and seemed to have a story behind it. When she sang "Go Tell It On the Mountain," she brought the mountain to you. One day I asked her where she had sung before joining our group. She replied that she had learned to sing Gospel music in a prison choir. When I met her, she had left her prison life far behind her with the help of our parish's prison outreach. What remained was a song. So I dedicate this song to La Sharon, although it's not her story, per se. Actually I don't know why she went to prison. But I think I know what got her out. And that's what this song's about.

Sarah is a silver bird, singing in a concrete cage
there ain't no golden filigree to let in the light, to let out the rage.
But when Sarah's singing in the jail choir, something in her face starts to change
She's a silver bird on a wire singing in the light, singing out the rage

She is climbing Jacob's Ladder, She is wading in the water
She is crossing over Jordan to the other side. (2x)

Sarah used to be a night bird singing the songs of the street through her crooked beak.
She left two crack babies at St. Mary's that the sisters' held and they sang to sleep.
Sarah talks about starting over again,
but she's afraid of her family and she's wary of her friends
and there ain't much work for ladies coming out of the pen
no matter what company they keep.

She is climbing Jacob's Ladder, She is wading in the water
She is crossing over Jordan to the other side. (2x)

Now the echo of the organ's coming through the hall
They're one voice down you can hardly tell at all
and Sarah she is waiting by the window, she's got all of her things.
She says, "I been to the desert, and I been down in the pit,
and I been to the mountain and I nearly jumped right off of it,
but today I'm on my own, gotta new song to sing.

She is climbing Jacob's Ladder, She is wading in the water
She is crossing over Jordan to the other side. (2x)

So go tell it on the mountain over the hills and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.