

Grant Amy

"DIXIE DRUG STORE"

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It was muggy July around supper time
When I pulled into New Orleans
I got dropped off at South Rampart Street
I was hungry for a plate of greens
I made my way down the banquette
Where I could see an open door
And overhead a sign made of painted pine read
The Dixie Drug Store
Peppers and roots were hanging
From the rafters above
There were oils and sprays all on display
For money luck and for love
I reached down to pick one up
When a dark hand grabbed my arm
And before I could see just who it was
She said you don't want that charm
The last man to walk that thing out of here
Just up and disappeared
Found his wallet and his wingtip shoes
Near a tombstone down in Algiers
What you need my travelling friend
Is a place to wash your jeans
And I wouldn't be the least surprised
If you were hungry for a plate of greens
She beckoned me on up the stairs
For she'd done made up her mind
Said take off your hat and kick off your boots
And leave your pride behind
She was turnin' tricks and nothing clicked
And the room was black as pitch
She had me backed up against the wall
I was fumbling for the switch
I could hear her crack the shutters
As I felt a little draft
When she gave me a shove into the tub
And said it's time to take your bath
I lay there in my stockinged feet
I was soaked from head to toe
At the same time down on Rampart Street
I heard the trumpet blow
Sparks started poppin' from an old tin cup

Sitting on the window sill
The whole place smelled like matches
And onions on the grill
I was catchin' cold and I told her so
As I let out a little cough
She told me since my pants were clean
Why don't I just dry off
I found myself a little tea-towel
Wrapped it around my waist
I was standin' there half naked
When I noticed we were face to face
And now it seemed the picture's
Gettin' pretty strange
Stripped bare in her chamber and
I hadn't even asked her name
I started to inquire
She knocked me upside the head
My noggin felt on fire
As she pulled me into bed
You needn't ask no questions
Of the things that don't concern you
If you aren't afraid of the fire son
Fire it won't burn you
She took me down to a secret place
In the bayou of her blankets
She offered to share her bourbon
I thanked her then I drank it
Thru a small crack in the ceiling
Burst the Louisiana moon
It shone down on our bodies
And we began to croon
Like a couple of coyotes
We were howling thru the night
And I swear they were a beatin' those
Congo drums outside
I told her she was crazy
And she replied it's true
And she finally introduced herself
As the famous Marie Laveau
I said now come on darlin'
She died a century ago
Don't believe the paper she said
It simply isn't so
I shot back that's impossible
There ain't a ghost of a chance
But I wouldn't turn a pretty ghost down
If she asked me up to dance
We laughed until the mornin'
By then my pants had dried
I picked up my hat and pulled on my boots
And I gathered up my pride

I figured she had done stepped out
I didn't see her anywhere
And I set out to find her
I headed on downstairs
Got down to the bottom
I couldn't believe my eyes
Gone were all the bottles
And the remedy supplies
I shouted out for Marie
I darted out the door
An old man on the wooden porch said
What you in there for
Son you got no business
The hoodoo store's been closed
Long as I remember
A century I suppose
But Mister I just spent the night
With a young gal named Laveau
He said the Widow Paris
Done had a little laugh on you
I said you mean to tell me
That was the voodoo in'
He nodded yes none other
The Queen of New Orleans

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