

Bryan White

"Put Me In The Zoo"

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Richard Bryant

There was a white man from South Carolina

Dabbled in anthropology

He took ship to the African continent

In the year of 1903

Will you lead me through the jungle

He asked the man who met him there

To the pygmy man and woman do you dare

Ota Benga measured four foot ten

From his head down to his toe

He could split the eye of the elephant

With his poison arrow and bow

And feed the village three times over

On Father Elephant's jungle steak

Wash it down with good palm wine down by the cane

break

He heard Phillips Verner and his guide

Wriggle in the bush one day

He'd never seen a man with skin like milk

He could not turn his gaze away

Phillips spoke to him in his own tongue

I've been searching for a man like you

Come sail away with me and I'll put you in the zoo

Ota looked into his pale blue eyes

As the man did cast his spell

How else to explain when they started next day

For the land where the white men dwell

Yes I will travel with you, Verner

But there is one thing you must do

Return me safely home so I can put you in the zoo

Forty thousand people in New York

Traveled to the Bronx one day

And stood in line in front of the monkey house

To see the pygmy on display

Ota Benga put on quite a show

Said the Times in a mixed review

But we're not sure we approve of a pygmy in the zoo

They say that Phillips Verner was half mad

But he was a man of his word

He took Ota back to his jungle home

A land that himself preferred

They built a pen, put his rocking chair right in
And his books and his magazines too
Then Phillips Verner said now you can put me in the zoo
The forest people came from miles around
To see the cage Phillips occupied
We leave him there as he rocks and he reads out loud
To the assembled countryside
Ota Benga never received his degree in Caucasian
anthropology
But he did get a laugh or two when he put Phillips
Verner in the zoo
He did get a laugh or two when he put Phillips Verner in
the zoo
And we dance like demons
Down in the furnace room
Spill red wine, green weed we might

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