

## **Jim Stafford** **"Swamp Witch"**

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Black water Hattie lived back in the swamp  
Where the strange green reptiles crawl  
Snakes hang thick from the cypress trees  
Like sausage on a smokehouse wall

Where the swamp is alive with a thousand eyes  
An' all of them watching you  
Stay off the track to Hattie's shack  
In the back of the Black Bayou

Way up the road from Hattie's shack  
Lies a sleepy little Okeechobee town  
Talk of swamp witch Hattie  
Lock you in when the sun go down

Rumors of what she'd done  
Rumors of what she'd do  
Kept folks off the track of Hattie's shack  
In the back of the Black Bayou

One day brought the rain and the rain stayed on  
And the swamp water overflowed  
Skeeters and the fever grabbed the town like a fist  
Doctor Jackson was the first to go

Some say the plague was brought by Hattie  
There was talk of a hangin' too  
But the talk got shackled by the howls and the cackles  
From the bowels of the Black bayou

Early one morning 'tween dark and dawn when  
shadows filled the sky  
There came an unseen caller on a town where road run  
dry  
You'd swear there was found a big black round vat full  
of gurgling brew  
Whispering sounds as the folk gathered round  
"It came from the Black Bayou"

There ain't much pride when you're trapped inside  
A slowly sinking' ship  
Scooped up the liquid deep and green

And the whole town took a sip

Fever went away and the very next day  
The skies again were blue  
Let's thank old Hattie for savin' our town  
We'll fetch her from the Black Bayou

Party of ten of the town's best men  
Headed for Hattie's shack  
Said, "Swamp Witch magic was useful and good  
And they're gonna bring Hattie back"

Never found Hattie and they never found the shack  
Never made the trip back in  
There was a parchment note they found tacked to a  
stump  
Said, "Don't come lookin' again"

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