

Joni Mitchell

"The Dry Cleaner From Des Moines"

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Words by Joni Mitchell
Music by Charles Mingus

I'm down to a roll of dimes
I'm stalking the slot that's hot
I keep hearing bells all around me
Jingling in the lucky jackpots
They keep you tantalized
They keep you reaching for your wallet
Here in fools' paradise!

I talked to a cat from Des Moines
He said he ran a cleaning plant
That cat was clanking with coin
Well, he must have had a genie in a lamp
'Cause every time--I dropped a dime--I blew it
He kept ringing bells
Nothing to it!

He got three oranges
Three lemons
Three cherries
Three plums
I'm losing my taste for fruit
Watching the dry cleaner do it
Like Midas in a polyester suit
It's all luck!
It's just luck!
You get a little lucky and you make a little money!

I followed him down the strip
He picked out a booth at Circus Circus
Where the cowgirls fill the room
With their big balloons
The Cleaner was pitching with purpose!
He had Dinos and Pooh Bears
And lions--pink and blue there
He couldn't lose there!

Des Moines was stacking the chips
Raking off the tables
Ringing the bandit's bells

This is a story that's a drag to tell
(In some ways)
Since I lost every dime
I laid on the line
But the cleaner from Des Moines
Could put a coin
In the door of a John
And get twenty for one
It's just luck!

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