

## Chris Smither

### "Desolation Row"

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They're selling postcards of the hanging,  
they're painting the passports brown,  
the beauty parlor is all filled with sailors,  
the circus is in town.  
Here comes the blind commissioner,  
they've got him in a trance,  
one hand is tied to the tightrope walker,  
the other one is in his pants.  
And the riot squad, they're restless,  
they need somplace to go,  
as Lady and I look out tonight on Desolation Row.

Albert Einstein, disguised as Robin Hood,  
with his memores in a trunk,  
passed this way an hour ago with his friend,  
a jealous monk.  
He looked so immaculately frightful  
as he bummed a cigarette,  
then he went off sniffing drainpipes,  
he was reciting the alphabet.  
You would not think just to look at him  
that he was famous long ago  
for playing the electric violin on Desolation Row.

Ophelia, she's 'neath the window,  
for her I feel so afraid.  
On her twenty-second birthday  
already she is an old maid.  
Now here comes Romeo and he's moaning,  
"You belong to me I believe,"  
and then someone says "You're in the wrong play, my  
friend,  
you'd better leave."  
They all play on the pennywhistle, you can hear 'em  
blow  
if you lean your head out far enough in Desolation Row.

Cinderella, she looks so easy,  
"It takes one to know", she smiles,  
and she sticks her hands in her back pockets,  
Bette Davis style.

To her death is quite romantic,  
she wears an iron vest.  
Her profession is her religion, her sin is her  
lifelessness.  
And the only sound the you can hear aftrter the  
ambulances go,  
is Cinderella sweeping up on Desolation Row.

Yes, I got your letter yesterday,  
about the time the doorknob broke.  
You asked me how I was doing,  
is that some kind of joke?  
All these people that you mention, yes I know them,  
they're quite lame,  
I had to re-arrange their faces and I gave 'em all  
another name.  
Right now I don't feel too good,  
don't send me no more letters,  
no, not unless you mail them from Desolation Row.

Right now I don't feel too good,  
don't send me no more letters,  
no, not unless you mail them from  
Desolation Row.

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