

## **Manhattan Transfer, The**

### **"Airegin"**

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(Music by Sonny Rollins - Lyrics by Jon Hendricks)

Wait'll y'dig it on the map - Airegin

Spelled backwards

Really're closin' up the gap - Airegin

Gone fac'wards

Back long time ago they saw a ghost

Ghost made a boast

Soon that ghost was host

[Repeat]

Those losing their hue

They goofed 'n got the wrong view

First, things reverse, last is first!

Y' dig it!

Whatta' y' think o'that'n get a load a'

What I tell y'

What this place is no one knows it

There's no traces of the kind o'place it was

Before it got "discovered" by the kind o'

Cat that knows the earth belongs t'him

Back when the world was young

An' man was a living god

An' he walked this earthly sod

This was sod that god would trod on

Till one day a stranger landed

With a line o'jive

Laid it on the natives till he had 'em thinkin'

Maybe that they should really take five

An' he quickly stole the natives' soul

So he could control it

An' he took care of that missionary biz

Till the lan' was his

Never heard a story draggy as that

Tell th' truth I ain't never heard another

That exasperated more

What an exasperating narrative t'play

Upon the sensitive and kindly soul that I am

'Way back when I was crawlin' in m'crib

I was doin' all kinds o'thinkin'

Aw'ready I had figured out the 'cut of m'jib'  
The kind o'soul that never liked t'tell 'r live a fib  
A body who was steadily reachin' up  
A min' always thinkin' on high-minded things  
Whee! I was always one t'be free  
Ain't never had a keeper why don't people  
Learn t'git along t'gether stead o'  
Meddlin' aroun' 'n fussin' with the fella nearest to 'em  
Me, I'm the old fashioned kind  
I was never good at follow-the-leader  
Real real real real real real real  
That's me, as real as a Yankee can be  
That's me

Millions o' years ago  
There was a Paleolithic age on Earth  
An' the whole world was young  
And full o'the vim of constant rebirth  
Brontosauruses 'n dinosaurs 'n pterodactyls  
Ever'where abounding that was the case  
'N plus the millions o' mammoths here 'n there  
An' in addition there were lots o'men everywhere  
Who had no hi-tech and no intellect 'nary a speck  
But in that spot  
Where it was so lush, where it was so hot  
Where many animal was roamin'  
An' nature was kind, life was thrivin'  
There livin' was actual an' the feelin' was natural  
I'm tellin' the truth  
What-a-benign livin' some livin'  
All's forgiven come on home

Blew a truly unruly storm  
That wrecked a boat in a climate warm  
'N full o'ashy-colored cats all lookin'  
White like ghosts  
'N when the natives checked 'em out  
It blew 'em away t'find that they resembled spirits  
Long ago there was a legend  
'Bout a spirit who would someday come

A look at these cats  
'N y' could see they prob'ly had some  
So they welcomed 'em with peace and love  
And everything there's plenty of  
'N soon the tables had turned to rigormortis  
That's when the castaway had his say  
Like a dog had his day they told the  
People that they were spirits actual  
Y'see how perfectly a fable c'n be  
Incorporated into what a cat'll think is factual

What was an accident turns int' something  
So unbelievably heaven-sent  
Everybody falls for it  
Right on down t' the militants  
'N marchin' 'n the martyrs 'n the murder of Lumumba

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