

City Of New Orleans

Iris DeMent

Ridin' on the city of New Orleans
Illinois Central Monday mornin' rail
Fifteen cars and fifteen restless riders
Three conductors, twenty-five sacks of mail
Out on the southbound odyssey
The train pulls out of Kakakee
And it rolls along past houses, farms and fields
Passin' towns that have no name
Freight yards full of old black men
And the graveyards of rusted automobiles

Good morning, America, how are you?
Say, don't you know me, I'm your native son
I'm the train they call the city of New Orleans
I'll be gone five hundred miles when the day is done

Dealin' card games with the old men in the club car
Penny a point ain't nobody keepin' score
Pass the paper bag that holds the bottle
Feel the wheels rumblin' 'neath the floor
And the sons of pullman porters
And the sons of engineers
Ride their daddy's magic carpet make of steel
Mothers with their babes asleep
Are rockin' to the gentle beat
And the rhythm of the rails is all they feel

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Nighttime on the city of New Orleans
Changin' cars in Memphis, Tennessee
Halfway home and we'll be there by mornin'
Thru the Mississippi darkness rollin' down to the sea
But all the towns and people seem to fade into a bad dream
And the steel rail still ain't heard the news
The conductor sings that song again
The passengers will please refrain
This train's got the disappearin' railroad blues

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