

Furry Sings the Blues

Joni Mitchell

Old Beale Street is coming down
Sweeties' Snack Bar, boarded up now
And Egles The Tailor and the Shine Boy's gone
Faded out with ragtime blues
Handy's cast in bronze
And he's standing in a little park
With a trumpet in his hand
Like he's listening back to the good old bands
And the click of high heeled shoes
Old Furry sings the blues
Propped up in his bed
With his dentures and his leg removed
And Ginny's there
For her kindness and Furry's beer
She's the old man's angel overseer

Pawn shops glitter like gold tooth caps
In the grey decay
They chew the last few dollars off
Old Beale Street's carcass
Carrion and mercy
Blue and silver sparkling drums
Cheap guitars, eye shades and guns
Aimed at the hot blood of being no one
Down and out in Memphis Tennessee
Old Furry sings the blues
You bring him smoke and drink and he'll play for you
It's mostly muttering now and sideshow spiel
But there was one song he played
I could really feel

There's a double bill murder at the New Daisy
The old girl's silent across the street
She's silent - waiting for the wrecker's beat
Silent - staring at her stolen name
Diamond boys and satin dolls
Bourbon laughter- ghosts - history falls
To parking lots and shopping malls
As they tear down old Beale Street
Old Furry sings the blues
He points a bony finger at you and
"I don't like you"
Everybody laughs as if it's the old man's standard joke
But it's true
We're only welcome for our drink and smoke

W.C. Handy I'm rich and I'm fay
And I'm not familiar with what you played
But I get such strong impressions of your hey day
Looking up and down old Beale Street
Ghosts of the darktown society
Come right out of the bricks at me
Like it's a Saturday night
They're in their finery
Dancing it up and making deals
Furry sings the blues
Why should I expect that old guy to give it to me true

Fallen to hard luck
And time and other thieves
While our limo is shining on his shanty street
Old Furry sings the blues