

The City of New Orleans

Steve Goodman • 1970



Rid-in' on the Cit-y of New Or - leans, Il - li - nois Cen - tral,
Mon-day morn-ing rail, Fif-teen cars and fif-teen rest-less rid-ers, Three con-
duc-tors and twen-ty-five sacks of mail. All a - long the south - bound
od - ys - sey, the train pull out of Kan - ka - kee and rolls a - long past
hous-es, farms, and fields, Pass-ing towns that have no name and
freight yards full of old black men, and the grave-yards of the rust-ed au-to-mo - biles.
Good morn - ing, A - mer - i - ca, how are you? Don't you know me,
I'm your na - tive son? I'm the train they call the Cit-y of New Or - leans,
I'll be gone five hun - dred miles when the day is done.

Dealin' cards to the old men in the club car,
Penny a point and no one's keepin' score,
Pass the paper bag that holds the bottle,
You can feel the wheels grumblin' through the floor.
The sons of Pullman porters and teh sons of engineers
Ride their fathers's magic carpet made of steam,
And mothers with their babes asleep are rockin' to the gentle beat,
The rhythm of the rails is all they dream.

Nighttime on The City of New Orleans,
Changing cars in Memphis, Tennessee,
Halfway home, we'll be there by mornin',
Through the Mississippi darkness rolling 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 his songs again,
"The passengers will please refrain,"
This train's got the disappearing railroad blues.

Good night, America, how are you?
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 day is done.