

Christabel

Robert Earl Keen

It's been seven long days and seven hard nights
In a sixty-two Chevy with broke taillights
An eastbound man in a westbound lane
A dishwater blonde about sixteen
Was standing on the shoulder with a ribbon in her hair
Her hand on her hip and her thumb in the air
And I pulled off the road and as she grabbed for the door
I knew the wind was cold 'cuz I'd seen it all before
And I was scared

Things ain't never what they seem
When you find yourself livin' in your own dream

Now the moonlight peeked in and out behind the clouds
Now and again on this godless child
And the radio was scramblin', cracklin' in the air
The ribbon she wore looked old in her hair
And I saw the moonlight sliver dead down on her face
I knew it was true she was in the wrong place
In the wrong time, in the wrong tale
I knew when I'd asked her she'd hiss, "Christabel"

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She was after the man who'd left her alone
With no father beside her and love longtime gone
And the snake deep inside her a hiss in her head
The rest that had been her was dying or dead
And she'd a taste for young women with pearly white skin
She spat on the floor when she spoke of the man who made her like this
Who had written her tale
This medieval maid they call Christabel

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Then she breathed out the story of her lover to be
A knight'n shining armor on a silvery steed
Who longed to be worthy so he sought the crusade
While she waited, breath bated, in linen brocade
But a pair of black eyes wove 'round her a spell
The snake they call Lydia seduced Christabel
And she cuddled her tender and she poisoned her soul
She stole her young body and made it her own

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Now the knight would love Lydia in Christabel's arms
And Lydia would have it should he ever return
But Lydia was left with the story undone
No silvery steed no castle no throne
Half woman half serpent entwined in a spell
A barge black and fancy this medieval tale

And she faded at dawn the bird and the beast

Deep in the dreams of those bound for the east
Like me

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