

# 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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