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# The Cathedral/Basilica of Saint Louis, King of France

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All souls in New Orleans are beautiful  
when the mist serves us heavenly air  
trapped on wet streets, the park noises,  
young artists wash feet with a little  
fountain water. We crawl along black brick  
long cracked streets aimed at the Mississippi.  
Fog like smoky faces unbound wishes  
humid people, lives eyeing around  
the quarter for someone, anyone to tell us  
about the parties, the great restaurants,  
the crowded bars and discreet strip clubs.  
All the rewards complete test and happiness.  
If we could live in this parish forever  
we could be truly happy our entire lives.

Then a wedding opens chilled cathedral doors  
with smells of an ordination at the Vatican.  
Grey marble and incense—intoxicates  
honors the crowd, union heat throb Christ.  
Sounds draw us nearer the ground in reverence  
kneeling beneath the sun and crescent moon.  
Our minds now unclouded, sins confessed.  
Forgiveness is a city of saints, Louis singing  
a song for Saint Joseph. He sings also  
for the sinners—bourbon street window swingers  
bad barkers next to three card monty dealers  
near Café Du Monde where a homeless man  
hit on me as we sat on black iron benches in the park  
with the Civil War cannon, model 1861 parrot rifle.

He said I had real fair skin and I was sweating.  
Beignet powdered sugar fell everywhere.  
I smiled, listened, chatted with him for a time  
about artillery and pirates, about the Jax brewery,  
voodoo. Then I went and had a few beers  
at the brewery, stumbled back to the Basilica  
and with other flaming hearts looked skyward.  
We prayed, recited plaque history, visitations  
always pondering a pilgrimage to another bar.  
Revelation love from local parishioners  
indulging the way sinners often indulge.