

Jim Stafford, Swamp Witch

Black water Hattie lived back in the swamp
Where the strange green reptiles crawl
Snakes hang thick from the cypress trees
Like sausage on a smokehouse wall
Where the swamp is alive with a thousand eyes
An' all of them watching you
Stay off the track to Hattie's Shack in the back of the Black Bayou

Way up the road from Hattie's Shack
Lies a sleepy little Okeechobee town
Talk of swamp witch Hattie lock you in when the sun go down
Rumours of what she'd done, rumours of what she'd do
Kept folks off the track of Hattie's shack
In the back of the Black Bayou

One day brought the rain and the rain stayed on
And the swamp water overflowed
'skeeters and the fever grabbed the town like a fist
Doc Jackson was the first to go
Some say the plague was brought by Hattie
There was talk of a hang'n too
But the talk got shackled by the howls and the cackles
From the bowels of the Black bayou

Early one morn 'tween dark and dawn when shadows fill the sky
There came an unseen caller on a town where road run dry
In the square there was found a big black round
Vat full of gurgling brew

Whispering sounds as the folk gathered round
"It came from the Black Bayou"
There ain't much pride when you're trapped inside
A slowly sink'n ship
Scooped up the liquid deep and green
And the whole town took a sip
Fever went away and the very next day the skies again were blue
Let's thank old Hattie for saving our town
We'll fetch her from the Black Bayou

Party of ten of the town's best men headed for Hattie's shack
Said Swamp Witch magic was useful and good
And they're gonna bring Hattie back
Never found Hattie and they never found the shack
Never made the trip back in
There was a parchment note they found tacked to a stump
Said, "Don't come look'n again"