

Michelle Shocked, Little Billie

Little Billie sure could sing the blues
Sang "ain't nobody's business if I do"
Tending drinks behind the bar
Pour cheap whiskey from a Chivas jar
Turn to water what was wine
Down at the Home of the Second Line
Little Billie sure could sing the blues

When a woman has five sons
She's gonna spend a lot of time
Down on her knees praying
And in her pillow crying
Now her boy lay on the street
Shot in the project called Lafitte
Little Billie sure could sing the blues

What can we say about your grief?
This life we live brings no relief
Take your joy when you can
Pray someday we'll understand
And for now just wonder why
There ain't no sun up in the sky
Close your eyes and feel the blues
Stormy weather, feel the blues

I've seen kings and presidents
Laid to rest with less circumstance
Little Billie sent her boy home
With the love of five thousand strong
The trumpet soothed the Li'l One
And Shorty played the tubaphone
And Little Billie danced the blues
Scratched the coffin with her shoes