

A Song of the Old South

**On a trip to Louisiana, I left a piece of my soul,
the romantic magic that lives on the levee.
There, by the snake brown water of the Mississippi,
is a poetic adventure that visits me in dreams.**

**We were on a history trip, trying to find the grand old south.
Not the kind where you pay and stand behind ropes,
where a sweet old black man tells you lies of Gone with the
Wind.**

**I wanted to find the real ruins to satisfy the senses and feed
my imagination.**

**We found a grand old lady overgrown in an oil field.
My racing heart ignored trespassing warnings.
A crumbling giant with a darkening stage for my characters,
a façade, the ruins breathing a captivating eerie quality.**

**Here there had been days of glory and riches,
followed by a long night of war and disaster.
I picked my way through an empty doorway,
I heard the whispers, looking for an age long ago.**

**I tried the crumbling steps and twisted my ankle.
I felt a silken gown brush past me on her way up the stairs.
The beauty transcended the decay, tender wrinkles of time.
All lost in a pattern of light and shadows of yesterdays.**

**And the mighty Mississippi continues to flow on,
eroding the banks; the destroyer, the serpentine.
She continues through the magnolia moonlight nights,
As ghosts of old fears and joys forever haunt us.**

By Kathie Stehr April 2002