

OLD SPICE

Words & Music by Allen Power

Dust clouds swirl across the floor as winter blows me through the door -
A mariner consigned to shore, too old to plow the seas.
And safe from that New England sleet that drove me down these narrow streets,
I gaze inside this dim retreat, awash in reverie.
For though my eyes are old and weak, I recognize the incense sweet
Floating 'round this old boutique - a spice shop, small and fine.
These spices were my stock in trade, when as a youth I shipped away,
And every scent recalls a day when Paradise was mine.

The smell of nutmeg comes to me, reviving distant memories
Of sailing down to Amboin', across the Banda Sea.
And its copper hue recalls a face, a form that moved with supple grace,
That held me in her soft embrace along the coral beach.
I lingered where the breakers rolled o'er her sarong with threads of gold
I heard her island tales unfold and hold me in their sway.
We whiled away the month of June, till summer brought the dry monsoons,
And I still hear her plaintive tune that sang our ship away.

When we shipped cloves, we sought the harbor at the port of Zanzibar;
Their pleasant fragrance flew so far, we caught it miles from shore.
And there among the fertile groves that lined the hills above the cove,
I fell into a greater love than I had known before.
We lay along the sand and foam; the Southern Cross upon us shone.
I nearly made her land my own, but the call to sea came clear.
So I shipped off on an ebbing tide, the ancient Arab dhows beside,
And oh, the salty tears we cried still flow through all these years.

Now here are ginger, tarragon, fine cinnamon from old Ceylon,
And untold lovers, come and gone, in days of fancy-free.
But here's an herb with flowers of blue, whose namesake's eyes I loved so true
I left the sailor's life I knew for my sweet Rosemary.
Now as I turn to face the storm whose winds pierce this old heart like thorns,
The thoughts of my dear Rose will warm these bones like summer wine.
But some fine day, once more I'll come into this spice emporium,
Recalling days when I was young and Paradise was mine.

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