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New Orleans Dreamer

by Maura Gage

Grisgris bags in your pockets,
a copy of Poe's "The Raven" in your hand,
you touch iron gates as you pass
haunted buildings steeped
in plush red wallpapers, velvety soft,
their imprinted textures mesmerizing,
the stairwells covered
in ruby carpeting.

You kiss a photo of Marie Laveau
kept in a locket, delicate antique silver,
as intricate as lace, frost on leaves,
poisonous oleander leaves underfoot,
and read from "The Raven,"
"Nevermore."

Daylight, but it graywashes
the theater of your soul,
celebrates its dramatic delivery,
and you're free to be any player
you long to be; oh, bright star,
city theaters reach for you,
the graceful curve of your cheek
turning quickly its "role" call.

As you paint the sets of your dreams
and bow to Beauty's dancing,
inhale the heaven you charm,
and breathe those dreams into being.

