

Steely Dan

Kid Charlemagne

Band's title is a reference to "Steely Dan III from Yokohama", name of a steam powered dildo from the novel "Naked Lunch" by William S. Burroughs.

Oh, well, let's talk 'bout acid already

While the music played you worked by candle-light

Those San Francisco nights

You were the best in town

The story takes place in San Francisco, especially the Haight-Ashbury region was known for "Summer of Love" phenomenon that occurred during the summer of 1967, when as many as 100,000 people, mostly young people sporting hippie fashions of dress and behavior, gathered together.

Just by chance you crossed the diamond with the pearl

You turned it on the world

That's when you turned the world around

Did you feel like Jesus

Did you realize

That you were a champion in their eyes

Main character, Kid Charlemagne, is actually Owsley Stanley, "The King of LSD" as Rolling Stone magazine called him. Probably, the most famous LSD producer of his age.

Stanley was the first private individual to manufacture mass quantities of LSD. By his own account, between 1965 and 1967, Stanley produced no less than 500 grams of LSD, amounting to a little more than ten million doses at the time.

He also happens to be the soundman for the rock band Grateful Dead.

And this is his story...

This refers to the poor-quality of LSD which was distributed.

On the hill the stuff was laced with kerosene

But yours was kitchen clean

Everyone stopped to stare at your technicolor motor home

Every A-Frame had your number on the wall

You must have had it all

You'd go to L.A. on a dare

And you'd go it alone

Could you live forever

Could you see the day

Could you feel your whole world fall apart and fade away

Get along

Get along Kid Charlemagne (2x)

Now your patrons have all left you in the red

Your low rent friends are dead

This life can be very strange

Vivid color paint brand name

All those Day-Glo freaks who used to paint the face

They've joined the human race

Some things will never change

Son you were mistaken

You are obsolete

Look at all the white men on the street

Owsley's association with Ken Kesey and the Grateful Dead is described in Tom Wolfe's novel The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test (1968).

Clean this mess up else we'll all end up in jail

Those test tubes and the scale

Just get them all out of here

Is there gas in the car

Yes, there's gas in the car

I think the people down the hall

Know who you are

Owsley Stanley, had his lab raided in 1965.

Actually, there was not Owsley Stanley, who was arrested after his car ran out of gas.

Careful what you carry

Cause the man is wise

You are still an outlaw in their eyes

By the time this song was written in 1976, Owsley Stanley had served time in prison

