

Cockburn Bruce

"All's Quiet On The Inner City Front"

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blue billboard on the roof next door
makes a square of light on the kitchen floor
smokes rises from a cigarette
there's a dull glisten where the table's wet
soft breath rises from the bed
a thousand question marks over my head

turn on the tube but there's nothing new
the usual panic in red, white and blue
"military advisors" marching in the square
knife-sharp trouser creases slicing air
private armies on suburban lawns
shoulders braced against the tidal dawn
all's quiet on the inner city front
i don't know why i should but i feel content

bell in the fire station tower
rings out the measure of the racing hours
i slip through the door to the roof outside
to gaze at the sign hanging in the sky
that sailor on the billboard looks so self-possessed
doesn't have a thing to forgive or forget
all's quiet on the inner city front.

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