

Cockburn Bruce

"Dancing In Paradise"

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praying mantis on screen

canoes prowl reef in early morning sun

as it flashes on the rhythmic fall of weed cutter's
cutlass blade

everybody's got something to sell besides the obvious
dollars and dope

aloe rub, starfish, vegetable patties, braid your hair
miss and bush

doctor cure

sudden angry eruption between aloe peddler and man
with property to protect

muscular security guard with truncheon of twisted wire

'kiss my blood clot' she hisses and they're enemies for
life

in the beach front bar they're playing reggae versions
of Jim Reeves' Greatest

hits

the waitress sings along, eyes focused dreamily on
that sentimental world

and there's DANCING IN PARADISE...

blue green ship in turquoise bay

swollen bauxite-red river rushing

stream rising from feathered bamboo hills

tracks once paved now falling away into deep lush hills

and the farmed-out road contracts pass through so
many hands

the print erodes with the weather-worn blacktop

and the jungle's always trying to reclaim the right of
way

and the mangoes cacao tumeric goats soursop

mushroom cane plantations limes

horses crayfish long-legged birds donkeys

curved horns of cattle above dense grass

ganja sensitive plant ackee

and some thorn whose prick brings lockjaw

and tires torn by sharp yellow rocks--

young girl stares pensively from dark door in pale blue
wall

Big About and friends at their crossroads bar

with its dirt corral for dancing

drink soursop juice all day long

in quest of the perpetual stiff bamboo

and there's DANCING IN PARADISE...

Biggy Dread gunned down by police at Bit Bridge
March 16

riding a mule cart to Sav-la-Mar pulled out a cutlass
and they had to shoot

that's what they say

something tells me they like to shoot

something in the eyes of the ones at the road block

where they searched the car and tried to get us to
confess to whatever...

there's truncheons and gas down in Harbour St.--

typical response where life isn't so sweet
and somebody gets desperate enough to say so--
price of fish price of flour
going up up up almost by the hour
and they throw money on spectacular shows
to show the world the right likes the right music
and the Prime Minister sucks ice cream in the company
of a happy band of
children
while a naked man, sores on his neck,
lies for days in Washington Boulevard gnawing chicken
bones
and the Chamber of Commerce thinks there's too much
crime
and there's a kung fu movie in every town
and there's DANCING IN PARADISE...
-- Jamacia, Easter 1985

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