

Bruce Cockburn

"How I Spent My Fall Vacation"

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Sun went down looking like the eye of God
Behind icy mist and stark bare trees
Inside the dim empty cinema two guys in leather
jackets
Glance at each other and shiver
"They never built these places with winter in mind"
Out the window down the gray road
You can see old walled monastery
Now become a barracks for the paramilitary police
I saw an old lady's face once on a Japanese train
Half lit, rich with soft luminosity
She was dozing straight upright head bobbing almost
imperceptibly
Wheels were playing fast in 98 time
Her husband's friendly face suddenly folded up in a
sneeze
Across the straight a volcano flew a white smoke flag
of surrender
In a Roman street on a full moon night
I was sick and there was a young cop in a circle of
yellow light
As we drew near he snapped the safety off his machine
pistol
And slid a trembling finger to the trigger
I wanted to say something calming but couldn't catch
his eye
He didn't want contact -- he was trained to see
movement
"Well don't shoot me, man, I'm a graceful slow dancer
I'm just a dream to you not real at all"
I wonder if I'll end up like Bernie in his dream
A displaced person in some foreign border town
Waiting for a train part hope part myth
While the station changes hands
Or just sitting at home growing tenser with the times
Or like that guy in "The Seventh Seal"
Watching the newly dead dance across the hills
Or wearing this leather jacket shivering with a friend
While the eye of God blazes at us like the sun...

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