

## **Bruce Cockburn**

### **"Postcards From Cambodia"**

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Abe Lincoln once turned to somebody and said:  
Do you ever find yourself talking with the dead?  
There are three tiny deaths heads carved out of  
mammoth tusk  
on the ledge in my bathroom.  
They grin at me in the morning when Im taking a leak,  
but they say very little.  
Outside Phnom Penh theres a tower, glass-pannelled,  
maybe ten meters high,  
filled with skulls from the killing fields.  
Most of them lack the lower jaw  
so they dont exactly grin,  
but they whisper, as if from a great distance,  
of pain, and of pain left far behind  
Eighteen thousand empty eyeholes peering out at the  
four directions  
Electric fly buzz green moist breeze  
Bonecoloured Brahma bull grazes wet eyed, (gazes??)  
hobbled in hollow of mass grave  
In the neighbouring field a small herd  
of young boys plays soccer,  
their laughter swallowed in expanding silence.  
This is too big for anger,  
its too big for blame.  
We stumble through history so  
humanly lame  
So I bow down my head  
Say a prayer for us all  
That we dont fear the spirit  
when it comes to call  
Sun will soon slide down into the far end of the ancient  
reservoir.  
Orange ball merging with its water-borne twin  
below airbrushed edges of cloud.  
But first it spreads itself,  
a golden scrim behind fractal sweep of swooping  
flycatchers.  
Silhouetted dark green trees,  
Blue horizon.  
The rains are late this year.  
The sky has no more tears to shed.  
But from the air Cambodia remains

a disc of wet green, bordered by bright haze.  
Water-filled bomb craters sunstreak gleam  
stitched in strings across patchwork land  
march west toward the far hills of Thailand.  
Macro analog of Angkor Wats temple walls

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