

## **Bruce Cockburn**

# **"The Charity Of Night"**

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Big city, Europa, July of 64.  
It's 5AM. Weather blowing bitter off the Baltic.  
Car slows beside him as he walks, hubcaps slow  
revolution, jaundiced looking  
pockmarked face round and windburn, short greasy  
black beard.  
Couple of language stabs, settle on English.  
It's cold.  
I give you ride?  
Don't you want to kiss me?  
This goes on halfway across the cobbled bridge. Driver  
pulls ahead gets out by  
the construction fence, ambles toward a rubbing bulge  
in his pants. In his  
jacket is the revolver. The hand is already in the pocket  
for warmth and  
fingers slide easily around wood grips. As slow as that  
predator's footsteps  
the gun comes out, arm straightens, scythe blade  
bisecting yellow forehead.  
Wind. Blue metal street light. Faint twilight shining in  
the corners of  
stones.  
Chorus:  
Wave on wave of life  
Like the great wide oceans roll  
Haunting hands of memory  
Pluck silver strands of soul  
The damage and the dying done, the clarity of light  
gentle bows and glasses raised to the charity of night  
Slow revolution, 1985, crosswise in a hammock in the  
hot volcanic hills.  
Its 3AM, the night after the air raid.  
>From the ridge she watched A37s like ugly gulls  
make a dozen swooping passes  
over some luckless town maybe ten clicks beyond the  
border. In the distance the  
Pacific glimmered silver. Now lascivious laughter floats  
on the darkness from  
the police post next door. Male voices and a woman's.  
Little clouds of desire  
painted around the edges with rum. In the muddy

street a pig suddenly screams.

Chorus

Pacific glimmers silver. Moon full over shadow  
mansion.

West coast. Can't say when.

There is incense and heat-driven scent of flowers. A  
tongue slides over soft  
skin, love pounds in veins, brains buzzing balls of lust.  
Fingers twine in wet  
hair, limbs twist and roll. On the dresser wax drips in  
slow motion down the  
long side of a black candle. Ecstatic halo of flame and  
pheromone.

Chorus

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