

Bruce Cockburn "Tibetan Side Of Town"

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through rutted winding streets of Kathmandu
dodging crowded humans cows dogs rickshaws
storefronts constellated pools of bluewhite
bright against darkening walls
the butterfly sparkle in my lasered eye
still seems to hold that last shot of red sun through
haze over jumbled roofs
everything moves like slow fluid in this atmosphere
thick as dreams
with sewage incense dust and fever and the smoke of
brick kilns and cremations
Tom Kelly's bike rumbles down
we're going drinking on the Tibetan side of town
beggar with a withered leg sits sideways on a
skateboard grinning
there's a joke going on somewhere but we'll never
know
those laughing kids with hungry eyes must be in on it
too
with their clinging memories of a culture crushed by
Chinese greed
pretty young mother by the temple gate
covers her baby's eyes face against diesel fumes
that look of concern, you can see it still
not yet masked by the hard lines of a woman's struggle
to survive
hard bargains going down
when you're living on the Tibetan side of town
big red enfield bullet lurches to a halt in the dust
last blast of engine leaves a ringing in the ears
that fades into the rustle of bare feet and slapping
sandals
and the baritone moan of long bronze trumpets
muffled by monastery walls
prayer flags crack like whips in the breeze
sending to the world - tonight the message blows east
dark door opens to yellow room and there are these
steaming jugs of hot millet
beet
and I'm sucked into this scene like this liquor up this
bamboo straw

sweet tungba sliding down
drinking on the Tibetan side of town
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