

Kevin Coyne

"The Burning City Smoking"

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40 million refugees with no place on this earth to call
their home
One for every aimless graduate with nothing else to
show for it but loans
And those of us who make a mark using someone
else's blood
Our western stain won't wash away, won't vanish in the
flood
It sets deeper with each hurricane and tidal wave and
war
Oh whoa oh woh
We want everything we see and once it's gone we just
want more

Atlas had those shoulders, we've got Ambien and
Jamesons and blow
To bind us in a bubble, keep the newsprint nightmare
distant and below
But when we wake in guillotines and pitch our
screaming fits
When the Governor strikes up the band and gags our
parted lips
When the worst case shows up dressed and dazzling
ready for the ball
Oh whoa oh woh
Boy that bubble's bound to burst and what a tragic way
to fall

The tabloids tell us hate the rat who strikes those
subways closed and puts you out
Forget those 50-hour tunnel weeks inhaling steel dust
poison through his mouth
Well if he don't deserve a pension that makes his
family feel secure
If we're now so disconnected it's our reflections we
ignore
And if our constant choice is skimming past the writing
on the wall
Oh whoa oh woh
Then I'm sad to say we're lost and I'm embarrassed for
us all

So most days I can't put to rest the burning city
smoking in my mind
And I play pretend the principals are nothing more than
actors running lines
And I stumble through a movie set where torture
victims laugh
An abandoned journalist who juggled knives and
dagged glass
While they entertain the marble Heads of State and
CEO's
Oh whoa oh woh
I stagger past anarchist extras through saloon doors
painted gold

So I turn and I see Uncle Sam all tied in wardrobe ready
for the shoot
So I walk right up and talk to him, I tell him that I'm
scared and I'm confused
While they test the cameras out and get the lighting
right, while catering fills coffee cups and carves up
apple pie
And while the stylists trim his beard and straighten
those lapels
Oh whoa oh woh
I ask his thin eyes(?) what made him drive us straight
to hell
And as my daydream ends he stands there shamed, a
shocked and shattered shell

But there's never any answer for my sorry tongue to tell
Oh whoa oh woh oh oh
Cause the director's shouting action and from off set
it's just as well

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