

Understanding Nothing

Bruce Cockburn

High above valley
Above deep shade coloured with the calls of cuckoos
The ring of coppersmith's hammer high in the hiss of the wind
Wind filled with spirits and bright with the jangle of horse bells
After a crisp night crammed with stars
It's morning

Over the scratched-up soil, scorched-earth wasted
Long shadows lead women bearing water
I watch the sway of skirts
Think of moist spice forests

Too many pictures
Swirling
Vertigo
Momentum of civilizations
Threw me too far over this time-simple landscape
And I hang here
In this mountain light
A balloon blown full of darkness
Got to let this ballast go
Got to float upward
'Til I burst

Weavers' fingers flying on the loom
Patterns shift too fast to be discerned
All these years of thinking
Ended up like this
In front of all this beauty
Understanding nothing

Rhododendrons in bloom
Sharp against Spring snow
Remind me of another time
In Japanese temple
There was a single orange blossom
At the wrong time of year
Seemed like a sign
When I looked again

Weavers' fingers flying on the loom
Patterns shift too fast to be discerned
All these years of thinking
Ended up like this in front of all this beauty
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