

Hoop Dancer

Bruce Cockburn

Tokyo Jetlag Evening Walking
Out of my throat appears this chuckle
A true 20th Century sound
A little crazed and having no tonal centre

The echoes of this laugh fade for a long time
Snaking among those jumbled pedestrians
Following that struggling Cedric taxicab
Sliding over the seeming infinity of white light and neon

With no warning, mind's eye winks like a lifespan
And opens again on memory flash of prairie Indian
Dancers -- they're on a stage, all jigging motion
And flare of bright feathers, surrounded by white faces
Floating on a sea of mind
Hoop dancer struts in front -- drum and voices blend with endless rain

There's a time line
Something like vertical, like perpendicular
Cutting through figures shuffling on horizontal plane
Cutting through the survival pride of the dancers
Through the guilty, sentimental warmth of the crowd;
Through to some essence common to us, to original man
To perhaps descendants numberless ... or few

Where it intersects the space at hand
This shaman with the hoops stands
Aligned like living magnetic needle between deep past and looming future
Butterfly pierced on each drum beat, wing beat, static spark,
storm front, energy circle delineated by leaping limbs

1st man last man dancing man man dancing
Hoops in hand trampled grass circle spreading
Voices flame above crazy coyote heartbeat drum

I see sunrise on the plains big river at dusk
Perpetual pillar of dust on prairie rim and always overhead
those wings -- circling, turning

He's the earth he's the egg he's the eagle always circling
Always turning -- always comes back to the centre

Hoops whirling, now transparent feet touch down on anaconda
Streets and on the next leap dissolve slowly into the moving lights

Rainbow steps, jerking universe
Goodbye, Man-in-time
And just beyond the clatter and cars the last long notes of wild
voices ring
Like Roland's horn