

# Birmingham Shadows

Bruce Cockburn

Birmingham  
Just behind the mountain  
Sparse streetlamps glow in hot half-moon haze  
Shadows shorten into little black pools that elongate behind  
We walk, talk some, laugh some  
Worked hard, now wired, and hanging out  
I'm curious what you might be all about  
Curious, too, what that dark-shape in the hard shining cruiser might do  
And you have no idea what you're getting  
out of of your own curiosity and tense energy  
Tattoo on chest like the key to the puzzle of your pumping heart  
Wearing your shadows all over your sleeve  
Wearing the role of young upstart

Birmingham shadows fall  
You show a little, I let something show too  
It's now or not at all  
Out on the road, it's always instant get-to-know-you

Under velvet trees, towering like the sides of a well  
Before the empty two office blocks  
Which we're admonished not to enter  
Policeman studies us, finds us confusing  
More amusing than threat  
Moves on, bemused  
Pavement spirals down ahead like the fossil of a giant shell  
Along the kingdom's midnight marches  
I wear my shadows where they're harder to see  
But they follow me everywhere  
I guess that should tell me that I'm travelling toward light  
I guess something you sang made me remember that  
I guess I'm saying thanks for that

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Got a head full of horrors and a heart full of night  
At home in the darkness, but hungry for dawn  
I only remember scenes, never the stories I live  
The good things about that is, it's easy to forgive  
Can't make assumptions about any of this  
We're nomads following our own songlines  
Who knows what could strike before we meet again?  
But if I fall down and die  
Without saying goodbye  
I give you this: you'll have lost a friend

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