

Birmingham Shadows

Bruce Cockburn

Birmingham
Just behind the mountain
Sparse streelamps 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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