

# 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  
Understanding nothing