

National Ransom

Elvis Costello

Running pell-mell and harum-scarum
Running as hot as they do or dare
Stick out your tongue
And drink down all the venom
From Cut-Throat Cuthbert
And Millicent St. Cyr

From the real old Macau
To the new False Americas
In the liberated territories

Unusual suspects shake down, shake down, shake down various dubious characters

Mother's in the kitchen picking bones for breakfast
Boiling them down by the bushel and the score
Pull out your thumb and count what's left of your fist
There's a wolf at the window with ravening maw

Did you find how to lie?
Did you find out just how to cheat?
The elite bleat, their obsolete
But are your prospects?
Exact, perfect object
Now, if you'd only genuflect

They're running wild
Just like some childish tantrum
Meanwhile we're working every day
Paying off the National Ransom

Woe betide all this hocus-pocus
They're running us ragged at their first attempt
Around the time the killing stopped on Wall St.
You couldn't hold me, baby with anything but contempt

Letters peal slowly from our speech
The claxton attempts to preach
Stretching for stars still out of reach

Drowning
Flailing
Outside someone's wailing

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Just like some childish tantrum
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