

# This Is Hell

Elvis Costello

This is hell, this is hell  
I am sorry to tell you  
It never gets better or worse  
But you get used to it after a spell  
For heaven is hell in reverse

The bruiser spun a hula hoop  
As all the barmen preen and pout  
The neon "i" of nightclub flickers on and off  
And finally blew out  
The irritating jingle  
Of the belly-dancing phoney Turkish girls  
The eerie glare of ultra violet  
Perfect dental work

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The failed Don Juan in the big bow-tie  
Is very sorry that he spoke  
For he's mislaid his punchline  
More than halfway through a very tasteless joke  
The fraulein caught him peeking down her gown  
He's yelling in her ear  
And all at once the music stopped  
As he was intimately bellowing "My dear..."

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The shirt you wore with courage  
And the violent nylon suit  
Reappear upon your back  
And undermine the polished line you try to shoot  
It's not the torment of the flames  
That finally see your flesh corrupted  
It's the small humiliations that your memory piles up

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"My Favourite Things" are playing  
Again and again  
But it's by Julie Andrews  
And not by John Coltrane  
Endless balmy breezes and perfect sunsets framed  
Vintage wine for breakfast  
And naked starlets floating in Champagne  
All the passions of your youth  
Are tranquillised and tamed  
You may think it looks familiar  
Though you may know it by another name

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