

# Thin Blue Flame

Josh Ritter

I became a thin blue flame  
Polished on a mountain range  
And over hills and fields I flew  
Wrapped up in a royal blue  
I flew over Royal City last night  
A bullfighter on the horns of a new moon's light  
Caesar's ghost I saw the war-time tides  
The prince of Denmark's father's still and quiet  
And the whole world was looking to get drowned  
Trees were a fist shaking themselves at the clouds  
I looked over curtains and it was then that I knew  
Only a full house gonna make it through

I became a thin blue wire  
That held the world above the fire  
And so it was I saw behind  
Heaven's just a thin blue line  
If God's up there he's in a cold dark room  
The heavenly host are just the cold dark moons  
He bent down and made the world in seven days  
And ever since he's been a'walking away  
Mixing with nitrogen in lonely holes  
Where neither seraphim or raindrops go  
I see an old man wandering the halls alone  
Only a full house gonna make a home

I became a thin blue stream  
The smoke between asleep and dreams  
And in that clear blue undertow  
I saw Royal City far below  
Borders soft with refugees  
Streets a'swimming with amputees  
It's a Bible or a bullet they put over your heart  
It's getting harder and harder to tell them apart  
Days are nights and the nights are long  
Beating hearts blossom into walking bombs  
And those still looking in the clear blue sky for a sign  
Get missiles from so high they might as well be divine  
Now the wolves are howling at our door  
Singing bout vengeance like it's the joy of the Lord  
Bringing justice to the enemies not the other way round  
They're guilty when killed and they're killed where they're found  
If what's loosed on earth will be loosed up on high  
It's a Hell of a Heaven we must go to when we die  
Where even Laurel begs Hardy for vengeance please  
The fat man is crying on his hands and his knees  
Back in the peacetime he caught roses on the stage  
Now he twists indecision takes bourbon for rage  
Lead pellets peppering aluminum  
Halcyon, laudanum and Opium  
Sings kiss thee hardy this poisoned cup  
His winding sheet is busy winding up  
In darkness he looks for the light that has died  
But you need faith for the same reasons that it's so hard to find  
And this whole thing is headed for a terrible wreck  
And like good tragedy that's what we expect  
At night I make plans for a city laid down

Like the hips of a girl on the spring covered ground  
Spirals and capitals like the twist of a script  
Streets named for heroes that could almost exist  
The fruit trees of Eden and the gardens that seem  
To float like the smoke from a lithium dream  
Cedar trees growing in the cool of the squares  
The young women walking in the portals of prayer  
And the future glass buildings and the past an address  
And the weddings in pollen and the wine bottomless  
And all wrongs forgotten and all vengeance made right  
The suffering verbs put to sleep in the night  
The future descending like a bright chandelier  
And the world just beginning and the guests in good cheer  
In Royal City I fell into a trance  
Oh it's hell to believe there ain't a hell of a chance

I woke beneath a clear blue sky  
The sun a shout the breeze a sigh  
My old hometown and the streets I knew  
Were wrapped up in a royal blue  
I heard my friends laughing out across the fields  
The girls in the gloaming and the birds on the wheel  
The raw smell of horses and the warm smell of hay  
Cicadas electric in the heat of the day  
A run of Three Sisters and the flush of the land  
And the lake was a diamond in the valley's hand  
The straight of the highway and the scattered out hearts  
They were coming together they pulling apart  
And angels everywhere were in my midst  
In the ones that I loved in the ones that I kissed  
I wondered what it was I'd been looking for up above  
Heaven is so big there ain't no need to look up  
So I stopped looking for royal cities in the air  
Only a full house gonna have a prayer