

Radio Baghdad

Patti Smith

Suffer not your neighbor's affliction
Suffer not your neighbor's paralysis
But extend your hand, extend your hand
Lest you vanish in the city and be but a trace
Just a vanished ghost and your legacy

All the things you knew, science, mathematics, thought
Severely weakened like irrigation systems
In the tired veins forming from the Tigris and Euphrates
In the realm of peace, all the world revolved
All the world revolved around a perfect circle

City of Baghdad, city of scholars
Empirical humble center of the world
City in ashes, city of Baghdad
City of Baghdad, abrasive aloof

Oh, in Mesopotamia aloofness ran deep
Deep in the veins of the great rivers
That form the base of Eden
And the tree the tree of knowledge
Held up its arms to the sky

All the branches of knowledge
All the branches of knowledge, cradling, cradling
Civilization in the realm of peace
All the world revolved around a perfect circle

Oh, Baghdad, center of the world
City of ashes with its great mosques
Erupting from the mouth of God, rising from the ashes
Like a speckled bird, splayed against the mosaic sky

Oh, clouds around, we created the zero
But we mean nothing to you, you would believe
That we are just some mystical tale
We are just a swollen belly that gave birth to Sindbad

Scheherazade, we gave birth
Oh, oh, to the zero, the perfect number
We invented the zero and we mean nothing to you
Our children run through the streets
And you sent your flames, your shooting stars

Shock and awe, shock and awe
Like some, some imagined warrior production
Twenty-first century, no chivalry involved
No Bushido

Oh, the code of the West long gone
Never been, where does it lie?
You came, you came through the West
Annihilated a people and you come to us
But we are older than you, you come, you wanna

You wanna come and rob the cradle
Of civilization and you read, yet you read

You read genesis, you read of the tree
You read of the tree beget by God
That raised its branches into the sky

Every branch of knowledge
Of the cradle of civilization
Of the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates
Oh, in Mesopotamia aloofness ran deep

The face of Eve turning, what sky did she see
What garden beneath her feet, the one you drill
You drill pulling the blood of the earth
Little droplets of oil for bracelets, little jewels
Sapphires, you make bracelets

Round your own world, we are weeping tears
Rubies, we offer them to you
We are just your Arabian nightmare
We invented the zero but we mean nothing to you
Your Arabian nightmare

City of stars, city of scholarship
Science city of ideas, city of light, city
City of ashes that the great Caliph
Walked through his naked feet formed a circle

And they built a city, a perfect city of Baghdad
In the realm of peace and all the world revolved
And they invented and they mean nothing to you
Nothing to you, nothing

Go to sleep, go to sleep my child
Go to sleep and I'll sing you a lullaby
A lullaby for our city, a lullaby of Baghdad
Go to sleep, sleep my child
Sleep, sleep, run, run

You sent your lights, your bombs
You sent them down on our city, shock and awe
Like some crazy TV show

They're robbing the cradle of civilization
They're robbing the cradle of civilization
They're robbing the cradle of civilization

Suffer not the paralysis of your neighbor
Suffer not but extend your hand