

An Undoing World

The Klezmatics, Possessed (1997)

By the time we're done with dancing,
Elsewhere darling you'll be glancing
And the night's a river-torrent tearing us apart.
Merely melody entwined us,
Easily the ties that bind us
Break in fibrillations of the heart.
Don't cry out or cling in terror
Darling that's a fatal error
Clinging to a somebody you thought you knew was yours.
Dispossession by attrition is the permanent condition
That the wretched modern world endures.

You drift away, you're carried by a stream.
Refugee a wanderer you roam;
You lose your way, so it will come to seem:
No place in particular is home.
You glance away, your house has disappeared,
The sweater you've been knitting has unpurled.
You live adrift, and everything you feared
Comes to you in this undoing world.

Copper-plated, nailed together, buffeted by ocean weather
Stands the Queen of Exiles and our mother she may be.
Hollow-breasted broken-hearted watching for her dear departed,
For her children cast upon the sea.
At her back the great idyllic land of justice
For exilic peoples ponders making justice private property.
Darling never dream another woman might
Have been your mother.
Someday you may be a refugee.

A refugee, who's running from the wars,
Hiding from the fire-bombs they've hurled;
Eternally a person out-of-doors,
Desperate in this undoing world.

Mother for your derelicted
Children from your womb evicted
Grant us shelter, harbor, solace, safety.
Let us in!
Let us tell you where we traveled,
How our hopes our lives unraveled,
How unwelcome everywhere we've been.