National Ransom

Elvis Costello

Runnin' pell-mell and harum-scarum
Runnin' as hot as they do or dare
Stick out your tongue and drink down all the venom
Off Cut-Throat Cuthbert and Millicent St.Cy
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 pickin' bones for breakfast
Boilin' them down by the bushel and the score
Pull out your thumb and count what's left on your fist
There's a wolf at the window with a ravenin' maw
Did you find how to lie?
Did you find out how to cheat?
The elite bleat, they're obsolete
So are your prospects
Exact, perfect object?
Now if you'd only genuflect
They're runnin' wild just like some
Childish tantrum
Meanwhile we're workin' every day
Payin' off the National Ransom
Woe betide all this hocus-pocus
They're runnin' us ragged at their first attempt
Around the time the killin' stopped on Wall St.
You couldn't hold me, baby, with anythin' but contempt
Letters peal slowly from our speech
The Claxton attempts to preach
Stretchin' out for stars still out of reach
Drownin', flailin', outside
Someone's wailin'
They're runnin' wild just like some
Childish tantrum
Meanwhile we're workin' every day
Payin' off the National Ransom
They're runnin' wild just like some
Childish tantrum

Meanwhile we're workin' every day
Payin' off the National Ransom

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