All These Strangers

Elvis Costello

Mistreat me darling, and I might just disappear
Upon freighter running dark out of Algiers
Put tiny grains in children tears
While taking twenty five percent
Of all the flashbulbs and mementos
From the mechanized divisions rolling over your frontiersI saw my baby talking to a man today
Speaking softly in a confidential way
I saw a shadow pull his glove off
As a bluebird flew over, life's no pleasure
When you doubt the one you loveWho are all these strangers?I never will go back again, go back into the past
For the flood is rising fast
You can break your window and look down
Into the muddy glass, it's a mirror or a lens to burnNow there was a deal done in Benghazi and Belgrade
Upon a scimitar or other crooked blade
Ransacks and loots, vacated suits
And a pistol points but never shoots
An army sitting in a locomotive yard without their bootsUpstairs, your man is painting rain out in the street
Imagines woman that he's destined still to meet
He's trying to sidetrack one to count on
Caught somewhere between a countess and a courtesan
And it's only love to feign and then it's goneWho are all these strangers?He's a privateer as dusk gets near
A brigand after dark, his victim lined with chalk
A corsair filled with horsehair to the core
Dashed on your eyes of Adamantine
You despised his stripling whineThat little smudger and the mouthpiece that he's with
Using his clause just like a practiced finger smith
I dreamed I took his digit prints
And then I sewed them on a villain's hands
Watched him ransom and demand and then called the flatfoots inI never will go back again, go back into the past
The flood is rising fast
You can break your window and look down
Into the muddy glass, it's a mirror or a lens to burnWho are all these strangers?
All these strangers
Sat upon a narrow bed
Thought about the things she said
All these strangersHow I wished the night would end
Tried to stop the days ahead
I'd carve her name down in the wood
Some small remembrance if I could

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