

The River in Reverse

Elvis Costello

How long does a promise last?
How long can a lie be told?
What would I take in exchange for my soul?
Would I notice when it was sold?

Wake me up
Wake me up
Wake me up with a slap or a kiss
There must be something better than this
'Cos I don't see how it can get much worse
What do we have to do to send
The river in reverse

Every man a crawling kingsnake
Every girl a half a heartbreak
Every woman sold into shame
To any son without a name

Are your arms too weak to lift?
Another shovel on the graveyard shift
Here comes the flood if you catch my drift
Where the things that they promised are not a gift

If man falls through the mirror of a lake
They fish him out quick and they call him a fake
Give him all the temptations he can take
Tie him up high 'til his bones break

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I thought I heard somebody laugh
Look out your window
They're chasing shadows in the dark
They're counting widows

I felt a sliver of glass
Saw a cross in splinters
I felt the truce of spring
Dig me out of the trench of winter

So count your blessings when they ask permission
To govern with money and superstition
They tell you it's all for your own protection
'Til you fear your own reflection
But the times are passing from illumination
Like bodies falling from a constellation
An uncivil war divides the nation
So erase the tape on that final ape running down creation
Running down creation

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