

## the whole island

White teeth piercing the night,  
and also the ravenous teeth of Chinese men waiting for breakfast  
after Christian doctrine.

They can still be saved from heaven,  
Deftly the maidens pull their penises  
in time to the hymns.

The violent wave invades the wide hall of genuflections.  
No one thinks to beg, thank, be grateful, testify.  
Sanctity collapses in a gale of laughter.

Although love's chaotic symbols are the first things touched,  
we have the luck to be ignorant of voluptuousness or cunnilingus,  
the perfect lover and the octopus woman,  
the strategic mirrors,

we don't know how to bear syphilis with a swan-like grace,  
unaware that soon enough we'll acquire these fatal refinements.

Bodies in the mysterious tropical drizzle,  
in the daily drizzle, the nightly drizzle, always the drizzle,  
bodies opening their millions of eyes,  
bodies, ruled by light, retreat  
before the slaying of skin,  
bodies, devouring waves of light, return like sunflowers of flame  
at the crest of ecstatic waters,  
bodies, afloat, drift seawards like extinguished embers.

It's confusion, terror, abundance,  
The imminent loss of virginity.

Rotten mangoes in the riverbed dazzle thought,  
and I scale the highest tree to fall like a piece of fruit.  
There's no restraining this body destined for the hooves of horses,  
caught crazily between poetry and sun.

Bravely I escort the pierced heart,  
stab the sharpest stiletto into the sleepers' necks.  
The tropic erupts and its flow invades my head  
pinned fast to the crust of night.  
The original piety of gold-bearing sands  
resoundingly drowns the Spanish mares,  
the whirlwind disorders the best-kept manes.

I can't see through these dilated eyes.  
No one knows how to watch, to study, to strip a body.  
It's the dreadful confusion of a hand in the greenery,  
stranglers traveling at the edge of sight.  
We didn't know how to fill the lonely course of love with glances.

I linger over a few old words:  
downpour, siesta, cane field, tobacco,  
with a simple gesture, scarcely if onomatopoeically,  
majestically I step through the crest of their music,  
intoning: water, noon, sugar, smoke.

9.

And I combine them:  
the downpour sticks to the backs of horses,  
siesta binds a horse's tail,  
the cane field devouring horses  
horses stray stealthily  
into the shadowy emanation of tobacco,  
final gesture of the Siboneys, smoke passing through the pitchfork's tines  
like the cart of death,  
final gesture of the Siboneys,  
and I dig in this earth for idols and make for myself a history.

Peoples and their histories in the mouths of all the people.

(...)

Each man eating pieces of the island,  
each man devouring its fruit, stones, and nutritious excrement,  
each man biting the space left by his shadow,  
each man tearing with his teeth at the void where the sun expects  
to be,



each man, his mouth like a cistern, dams up the sea's water  
but pathetically, like Münchhausen's horse,  
spews it from its hindquarters,  
each man in the rancorous labor of trimming  
the edges of the world's most beautiful island,  
each man trying to drive the beast that's a cross  
between beast and fireflies.

But the beast is as lazy as a beautiful stallion  
and stubborn as a primitive mare.  
Each day it passes through the four chaotic moments,  
the four moments in which it can study itself  
—its head between its paws—searching the horizon with a cruel eye,  
the four moments when cancer opens: daybreak, noon, dusk, and  
night.

(...)

10.

Skin at this hour stretches out like a reef  
and bites its own borders,  
skin takes to screaming like a madwoman, like a fat sow,  
skin tries to cover its light with palm leaves,  
with fronds carried carelessly by the wind,  
in a fury skin covers itself with parrots and pitahayas,  
absurdly it covers itself with somber tobacco leaves  
and the remains of shadowy legends,  
and when skin has become but a dark ball,  
the horrific hen brings forth a white egg.

Cover it! Cover it!  
But the light advances, invades  
perversely, obliquely, perpendicularly,  
the light is an enormous vent that sucks the shadow,  
and you slowly raise your hands to shield your eyes.

The least confessable secrets are spoken:  
light moves tongues,  
light moves arms,  
light throws itself on the guava vendor,

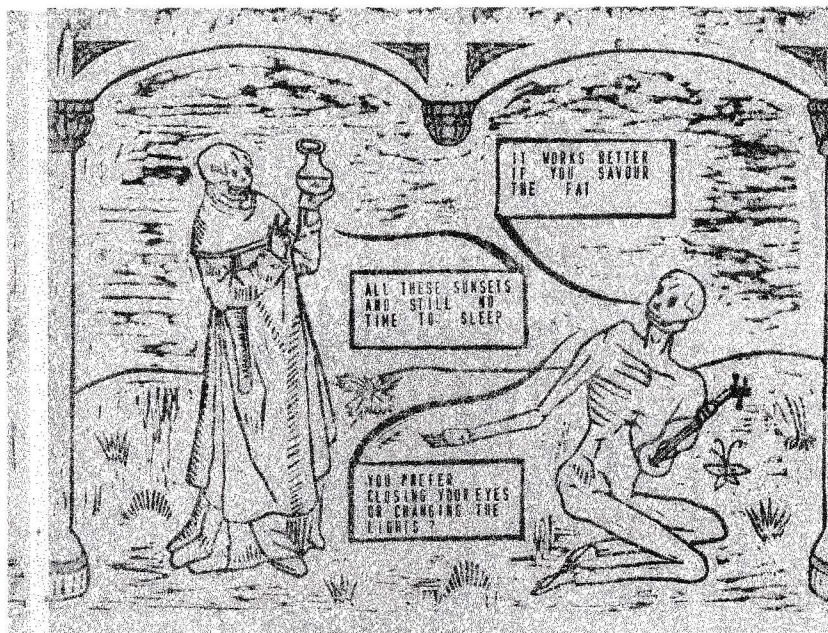
light throws itself on blacks and whites,  
light strikes itself, rushes convulsively from side to side,  
begins to explode, to burst, to split apart,  
light begins the most horrific illumination,  
light begins to give birth to light.  
It's noon.

Light, like a plague, can kill a people.  
At noon the brush is filled with invisible hammocks,  
men, stretched out, are like leaves on metallic water.  
At this hour no one could say the beloved's name  
or raise a hand to caress a breast;  
at this hour of cancer a stranger come from distant shores  
would ask pointlessly what plans we have  
or how many men die of tropical diseases on this island.  
No one would hear him: their palms turned upwards,  
ears plugged by the cork of drowsiness,  
pores blocked by the wax of an elegant boredom  
and the fatal ingestion of faded glories.

11.

Where in this cloudless sky is the crack of thunder  
that splits the sleepers' eardrums?  
What paleolithic shell would burst with its wild horn the sleepers'  
eardrums?  
Shell-men, hermit-crab-men, tunnel-men.  
My people, too young to know how to create order!  
My people, divinely rhetorical, too young to know how to tell your  
story!  
Like light or childhood you still don't have a face.

Suddenly noon gets under way,  
gets under way within itself,  
motionless noon moves, sways,  
floats upwards like a fart,  
its seams about to burst,  
noon without culture, gravity, tragedy,  
noon pissing upwards  
reversing the great piss  
of Gargantua on the towers of Notre Dame,



and all those stories, read by an islander who doesn't know  
a defined cosmos.

(...)

A poetry completely of the mouth, like saliva:  
milkweed, wax flower, moon flower.

A microscopic poetry:  
Job's tears, Jupiter's tears, Love's tears.