

1992

## XAYMACA - for Lorne Macdonald

Ian Adam

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Adam, Ian, XAYMACA - for Lorne Macdonald, *Kunapipi*, 14(2), 1992.  
Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol14/iss2/3>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: [research-pubs@uow.edu.au](mailto:research-pubs@uow.edu.au)

---

## XAYMACA - for Lorne Macdonald

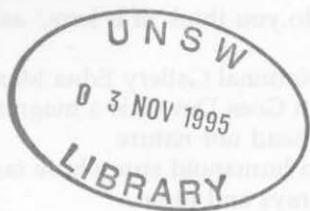
### Abstract

My wife is in the photograph, the ship is steaming away to the right of her shoulder, heading towards the horizon as she poses in the warm Caribbean sea.

# Ian Adam

XAYMACA

- for Lorne Macdonald



The slave ship called at Ocho Rios.

My wife is in the photograph, the ship  
is steaming away to the right of her shoulder,  
heading towards the horizon—  
as she poses in the warm Caribbean sea.

Behind me as I snap the picture  
Dunn's River waterfall,  
jammed with people  
climbing the ledges up its 600 feet,  
holding hands in chains.

'What did you think of Jamaica,' asked Linda Cameron.

The ship was enormous in the harbour  
a hotel containing the vacationers  
whose vacation was the ship.  
It squatted, the ship.  
It was an angel  
food cake. Layered  
with stories. It crushed the harbour  
sweetly. Inside were the rituals  
of captivity.

In Ocho Rios the human chains  
climbing the waterfall,  
in the town market  
chains of those  
too poor to ever leave the island  
selling to cruise ship vacationers,  
captive of the tour.

The tourists see those living off tourism,  
the locals see the tourists.

It's all authentic.

'What do you think of it here,' asked Claire Harris.

In the National Gallery Edna Manley's  
'The Sun Goes Down' is a magnificence  
neither head nor nature  
a brown humanoid sun whose face  
is both rays and night,  
ours  
and not ours,

strong as Henry Moore or Giacometti  
but too female, too Jamaican,  
for fame.

A mobile also there, unauthored,  
grit dirt floor cig-buffed littered  
leads counter-clockwise  
through corrugated iron panel walls  
covered with torn posters  
and graffiti  
(lie down girl me stick it in')  
to a dead body  
and cast-off bottles lying in rubbish:  
a vicious spiral,

anonymous, Jamaican, unrecognized.

Thirty percent of Kingston population  
is squatters.

A sign in shanty town reads  
'MAN WHO STEAL HERE, HIM GET HEAD CHOP OFF.'

'Don't you always see me laughing?'  
said Eduardo the Kingston driver,  
as we planned the excursion to Ocho Rios.

he gave jolly comments  
on points of interest  
all along the way.

The sugar cane grew  
thick, fibrous, higher than men.  
It was harvested by slaves

captive to a money chain.  
It crushed the harbour with sweetness.  
It was a vicious circle.

Matthew 'Monk' Lewis  
author and slave-owner  
wrote a story about Jamaica,  
'The Isle of Devils.' The devils  
are not plantation owners,  
but blacks. His blacks. His story  
multi-layered  
dark sugar.

He dies of yellow fever  
en route to England.  
Buried at sea  
his body does not sink,  
is last seen  
floating back to Jamaica. Lewis  
circles back  
to the Ocho Rios ship.  
His story  
sugar, white-layered.

Eduardo had smoked ganga at Ocho,  
I could see it in his eyes,  
he drove silently and viciously back to the hotel.