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Poems

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Poems

Abstract

IN LAGOS HARBOUR, ROADSIDE REFLECTION

Martin Bennett

IN LAGOS HARBOUR

Coolly down the Marina strolls the breeze,
A musky courtesan on a flying visit
From Brazil. Pawpaws and palmtrees sigh,
The ships so ornamental out there
Against the gold-strewn blue, O rare moments
Of between when thoughts drunkenly forget
Who own them now bustling noon mellows
Toward evening and at ten kobo a trip
The rusty green ferry to Apapa
(Manufactured by John Brown, Glasgow)
Hoots thrice in the name of leisure.

Tincans, orange peel, used condoms, oilslicks
Drift upon the roadstead's swell to ensure
Things don't get too tidy or romantic.
With the strange muscularity of change
Both shorelines bristle, near and distant future
Heralded by cranes' colossal elbows –
Outside the Post Office a cast-bronze
Shango, Yoruba god of lightning
And now of telecommunications,
Fist clenching a thunderbolt bouquet,
At his back the go-slow's new-fangled roar.

ROADSIDE REFLECTION

Former cynosure of ministries,
 His image so exorbitantly posed for
 And printed with public funds
 Lies soiled and torn

At the roadside, litter
 For history's dustbin, one more leaf
 Rustled by the feet
 Of children, a swerving car.

In some obscure prison-cell
 The man stripped to himself lives
 On, envying the warder
 The freedom of his poverty.

