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Poems

Cyril Dabydeen

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Poems

Abstract
Poems

Cyril Dabydeen

ANACONDA'S DOUBT

It turned around and made a wave
among bramble and floating twigs

it heaved with an answer and breathed
heavily against the swirl of the dark

it did not understand the pin-prick
that could make blood ooze — that could

cause dizziness in its head; it remained
coiled and belched fire like a dragon

it knew its ancestry without knowledge
of Jung — it merely kept its eyes open

and watched other beasts take their turn
to swallow. It heaved for flesh, it snorkled

with an ear-flap that was missing before.
It moved forward and stretched its body

like tentacles — outdoing an octopus in rage.
It understood the message of viscera —

blood and pulp and algae around its lungs —
it didn't mind; it simply cleared things

out of the way and rested peacefully
in a sluggish mire to grow more cells

that would swallow and absorb, that would
dream how things long past could survive.

EXPLORER

In the fastness

 I struggle through —
vines, overhanging;
 & thinking of the city
with solid bars,
 the streets paved
with gold.

 I sing this ancient song
at the mouth of the Orinoco,
 El Dorado my quest —
I move on

 — heaving against tropical
sun & rain ... sweltering.
 I heard talk of suicide
 as I continue to enrage
the Queen.

I pull at the oars with tired arms
 looking everywhere
for the one who bathed
 in the gold dust.

Finally, I begin to imagine
 my own death;
 back in the Tower I am resigned
to fate — describing
 The Historie of the World
far from the tropical
 wilderness

CROCODILES & CANNONS
(after Gabriel Garcia Marques)

Somewhere a life
beating out its remains
Sir Francis Drake
marching over the mountains
where Guevara dreamed
of taking control

He pressed along
the lakes and rivers
hunting crocodiles for sport
like the ancient
Egyptians —
reptiles were a little
less sacred then

El Draco heading back
with the ancient boom
in Europe's ears
pelt
dried in the
tropical sun

emblem for the Queen
a rug for her to step
out
on, outdoing Raleigh's gallantry —
the time came
when he was ready
to singe
the King of Spain's beard

— throbbing all Latin
America
festering with the carcass
wound —
bleeding to death