

Arrival in Brazil

The red snapper that was lunch.
The butter-sweet oil in which the fish swam to be eaten.
And the jostling at the margin, ourselves pressed to and fro.
The thumping of drums, the clucking of rimshot and wood block.
A red mist enveloped our eyes, a smell of blood permeated the crowd.
How we shimmied and shivered in the heat.
Skin afire, bones afloat in the clawing flame that is Carnival.
The police had owl eyes in the daytime.
When the alarm sounded, it could mean but one thing.
That the boathouse had been destroyed, and no one could leave.
Our options were fewer, but we were happier.
We who had come to Brazil by way of Coos Bay.
Having waited years for a pilot.