At the village shop,
shifting his weight around
so you could hear
the few grains of rice or scratch-grain
or whatever it was that spill
crunching under his feet,
the owner pits science
against conscience
as he sifts a little extra corn meal,
then sugar for goodness sake
and as a measure of courtesy
on to the scale
(of course that was well before
this latest onslaught of diabetes
begin eating everybody heart
inside out
and trying to desecrate we soul
at the knee joint)...

But getting back to the smell
of cider, lux soap
and pigtail in brine

So how your grandmother, he says,
wiping his hands and letting fall
the wing flap of his white apron
all business minded
and yet sociable like.

I say hearty cause it sound life affirming –
sound like if Ma was constantly
throwing back her head and guffawing

and turning his mind to origami,

he folds up the parcels neat, neat so

figures out minute change

hums to himself when all it adds up

sticks his pencil at a jaunty angle

relative to his ears

and offers me a paradise sweetie

from a glass jar

before he rags the counter clean

and frowns all hopeful-like to the next customer.

Across by the main road

and a little ways up

(if you pass the rum shop

you too far out),

they building a new mini-market

with everything exact

and pre-package

and name-brand

cause is ample time we Bajans learn

how to suffer change

and to hell –

if I may make free with the devil

and his consortium –

with the dispatch.