

Patrick Sylvain



Marooning

They've set their dreams sailing
toward the windward passage.
One, two, three hundred
packed on rafters
clinging to their desires
to embrace the Eagle's
metallic freedom.

They, Toussaint's descendants,
once proud founders of freedom,
now marooned themselves
with the night sky,
trying to escape hawkish eyes.

They've sailed across the Atlantic,
riding currents.
Feet-damped, skull-baked.
They are once more children of salt.
Avoiding sharks and coast-guard cutters.
They've set their dreams sailing
toward the windward passage,
their dark faces beaten by the sun,
and their blistered hopes marked by scarlet stains,
refusing to be consumed by the whirlwind
of lurking death, they've continued
to navigate westward
in search of Juan Ponce de Leon's legends.

Calabash

Once ashore, they've found neither the eternal
fountain of youth, nor riches. Instead,
some landed at chrome with their blistered hopes
locked-up, or are found lifeless on sandy beaches.
Their corpses disturbing fenced-Greenbacks' eyes.
Others slipped their way
among Florida's downtrodden
until they were rescued by family members
whose daubed lives *Agwe*, the spirit of the sea,
spared on the waves of life's incision
where glutton poverty, like Atlantic sharks,
awaited with rows of festive teeth.

