

Sassy Ross

SUMMER NIGHTS

In the cease and settle of summer nights, while the wind calm
and the moon, falcate, fall light as footsteps over the tired town,
my six cousins and I would file through the fence gate,
pile like *zandoli* on a single flight of concrete stairs.
Our bones bare but for belt marks and mosquito bites,
we stared at the upturned bowl of our star-studded imaginations.

Constellation heaped upon constellation, stars winking like women,
spilling from our hearts like fireflies from glass jars.

“Them *éwols* there,” Jue or Jamal or Shervon would start, “is the *bato*
I will build from scratch, sail from Castries wharf to the Milky Way.
And see that meteor shooting faster than a Pédé shot,
is the game-winning goal I score in St. Lucia’s first World Cup.”

Pegasus, or lampposts dispersed around Rodney Bay?
Seven sets of eyeballs searched but none could say
where earth stopped and sky began.

We possessed no personal history then, our past as poor as our parents
who shared no stories of who they were or how they came to be.
But as we sat on those steps perched on Pavée promontory
we wanted less to remember ancestry
than to discover new possibilities concealed
in our handed-down deprivation.

Summer nights, the wind soft, the sea gone to sleep,
my six cousins and I envisioned our futures in the firmament of dreams
and stars were our salvation.