

The morning disc spin from Puerto Rico
was sending a cowboy from last year's parade
The machine swung his voice from shriek
to silence and back

I suppose they'd been listening to him
as intently as I to her
and out just as much need to exchange
our pasts

SALTFISH AND ACKEE

The ackee's flower is fat and pallid
too aptly named *Blighia*
sapida for Capt. (Charles Laughton) Bligh
of the *Bounty*

In his imperial impatient days
some white men forced the lacquer pods
died eating their spicy pulp too soon

But on Jamaica the freed slaves' children
took time for loving
waiting for the black seeds to unsheathe
and let the bounty of their pith
glorify a plain salt codfish sauté

My last night on the island
one hostess was a girl whose blood
branched back to Pekin, Dahomey,
Bangalore perhaps The other
velvet-skinned graceful as a dark gladiolus
served saltfish and ackee to us three:

 their pink young Montreal boyfriends
 (export men in Kingston Town)
 and one greywhite Vancouver poet

The cod was from Newfoundland they said
The new found land is here I said