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# Ricky Ricardo Drinks Alone

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Ricky Ricardo Drinks Alone ·  
*Jim Simmerman*

I-yi-yi-yi! look at that moon  
floating up there like a teaspoon  
of sweet cane sugar or the head  
of a conga drum. Someone said  
the man-in-the-moon is an old  
Cuban fisherman who sold  
his boat for enough bay rum  
to sail out of his body one  
soft Havana night and half  
the time I think it's true. Laugh  
if you like, but I have watched  
his eyes fix upon the thatched  
hat of a woman who waits  
each night by the dock for her late  
sailor to return, only to  
see the morning paint a blue  
and emptier harbor, only to turn  
once more from the sea and yearn  
slowly homeward, across fallow  
tideland. Her long yellow  
dress made her look, from  
a distance, like a canary come  
to sing the forests back.

What  
has become of the rains that cut  
through the night like maracas? And  
of the flowermonger whose hand  
was a warm garden on my neck? And of  
the sails that hovered like doves  
on the horizon? And of the clop-  
clop-clop of Lucinda? I want to stop  
the moon with a bray sometimes. I  
want to bray so sweetly it will fly  
backward, like an empty bottle  
over my shoulder. Bray until  
I am back on the beach with my  
father, learning to tie  
a bowline, mend a net. There

was a song he sang—I remember  
how the surf beat out time, though  
the words, the words. . . . Low  
tide left me shells shaped like  
pink fans. Luck was the bright  
bit of glass I found one day. Keep it  
close, he told me. Memory is a ship  
in a bottle. The bottle breaks.