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Ricky Ricardo Drinks Alone

Jim Simmerman

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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 thatHovered 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.