Ricky Ricardo Drinks Alone

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2646
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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.