

## **Panama Soul**

Afro-Antillanos  
tie red ribbons  
around a tree  
to ward off the evil eye,  
all living a few miles from

the Others  
in Panama City,  
unable to see  
the evil eye  
as their souls swim  
taking shark-bites  
from each other.

We are  
a-lone people  
caught in a fishing net  
with gleaming tilapia  
swarming in death throes  
around us.

And the fish die,  
gills open and beating  
like a human heart.

Already,  
all jaguars and pumas  
have fled.

Already,  
Noriega has cried,  
hoarding spirit-food,  
his watery fingers  
caressing a satanic solution.

Here,  
soothsayers invade  
my night-dreams,  
riding mares  
into the moon-bright sky,  
shoving desire  
between my thighs.

Leaving me  
ablaze,  
sucking for air,  
a tilapia  
caught  
in God's  
silver net.

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