

ELECTION

Fear comes in on little snake's feet,
Serpentine movements, combined efforts,
A sonata and a slithered concertina,
Sidewinding, tickling the stomach with paralysis--

A black mamba folds away into the moonlight.
A palm leaf slips across the road.

The dark night falters at a wandering bush
And awakens suddenly at the sting of ants,
A crawling mass mad with undecoded directions,
Stomps forward in the rush of raffia things
And forest devils, the thunder of feet
And the singing of, "Man, man."

The souls of the ghost-coloured
Live out fables of honoured ancestors
Reborn in the tropical ferment
And renewed in the politics of jealousy.

Elders, rogues, and lorry-park boys
Shout in the sacred forests,
Linger in nightclubs besieged by colonial decay,
Vie for power with the medicines of yore,
And aim the barrel right into
The machinations of the modern world.