

Excerpts from *Green Taxis* by GK duBois

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The Brooklyn West Indies

Heat
the music lifts the trees
up from the earth
Jamaica girl in silver strings swings her hips
her congregation steps
the man behind wears a ship
he sails on the pavement river
Eastern Parkway

Parade!
“Come to the United States, yeah”
“Come to the United States”
the refrain wails with the taste of
curried rice, jerk chicken
A thousand relics
for sale in a booth big as
a wicker basket
whistles, flairs, lemonade, T-shirts
a table clunked down five floors to
call “bakery shop”
the old woman, her eyes
going from you to her
homemade pie

Heat
So many black bodies
carving like glaciers
their highway
float after float
banners blaring
twenty dancers held in air by twenty
2 by 4s, forty rusting nails and 200 speakers

“Come to the United States, yeah”
“Come to the United States”

Heat
body grind dancing full contact allowed
the blue painted boy and moon girl on stilts
strutting as tall
as playground hoops Bumble
bee man and peacock feather woman
ruffle and hum for handheld
home camera news Every
shape and size is in full color glitter--
pinstripe suit sweat beading seller
offering bean pies
in foil wrap
the best thing
you ever ate

And the dancers come and come
as the police wait and wait
till the crowd,
too cramped by man’s barriers,
melts
goes under goes over
joins like streams
a river
a parade
curving
towards the source

9th Ward Balcony, New Orleans

The barking starts around
5 PM. One dog walking by
struts a little ass too high
past another. This one--
chain-checked, reigned in, set sturdy
at unwag behind the fence--wants
a duel, porch step points a cry,
a duel for what's not his, win lose or draw.
Before long all the kept dogs are
joining in. The duel's a
trio, the trio a chorus, yips and
yowls, every stoop a soapbox
for dreamers and victims and dealers
making scam out of injustice
Strutter honey-tongue spoons replies
in sweet kind, irking the leash taunt--
neck to knuckle vein of the owner man's hand

So what's at stake at
5 PM? No one knows for sure--buttermilk, an open field
wind-coursing piss, the indignity of silent protest.
From behind paint-chipped un-shuttered half windows
through crescent spaces in mildewed curtains, neighbors
verify the cacophony with their eyes. On the balcony
that slants past dilapidation, between corrugated
iron bars bit by rust, the narrator lifts a howl—
witness turned participant

work day	buy day	
cook day	call day	stoop day

Muggy Mexico gulf Louisiana's New Orleans behind Bourbon veil
on the foghorn tumbleweed crumble down side of 2 pairs of
tracks, the chorus hounds, impeached, keep on
Fences swing wide like mouths.
The balcony's gonna fall.
I ask you
What's free when there's no where to go?

The barking ends when the coming
train, bedded down with a nation's junk, swallows
sound on its greedy rise to a
fat shrill

Will you marry me for three years (or maybe two)
We'll have all the pleasure and none of the stress.
There's too much distraction on the street. We'll
have one solid thing at least for a while. We can
still argue and split and know it's a performance.
Forever is depressing. We end in three years. We
need this. Enough patching together the days. Good
day. Bad day. Wasted day. There's no backwards.
It's too late to waste energy on anxiety. We can't float.
I'll pay the bills. I'll have a reason to work. I need to
relax. To come down. I need a now. You've got things
to do.

Promise me, you'll marry me for two years (or maybe
one). Your family wants you to be famous. I look good
in black. We'll use the time wisely. We'll learn and feel everything
there is to learn and feel then get out. We'll be a contract not up for
renewal. Lame duck marriage getting posterity done. I'm
too afraid I won't see you again. There are too many people;
everything takes too long. I'm trying to trap you. We'll live
in the country and the city. We won't let beginnings slip
away.

Marry me this year, that's all I ask. 365 days, hardly a dance.
I'll never tire of your kisses. I'll give you every pleasure I can.
Nakedness will still be a reward. Every day will be our last.
We'll travel to the far sand for the sun fall. Your parents won't
have to know. They're far away. The synagogues will be there
for another. Marry me. I'm not saying every minute will be
bliss, but we'll still want to fuck. We won't be used up. Together
isn't awful if together ends. You don't even have to cut yourself
off from your other loves. Just tell them you're married this year.
They'll all be jealous.

Marry me. Forget a year, today is enough. I can't stop needing
to possess and you can only live moment to moment. We'll
sign both forms at the same time. We'll flaunt our weakness.
We'll find a rhythm that belongs all to us. I know a good
restaurant. We'll lie in the sun. That movie looks nice. Is the
roof open? You taste like cigarettes--

**For the Girl Who Needs Air
(in the morning when the sun rises)**

We are young and skinny we need soft
things our arms tingle and go numb cut
off our legs we are no body entangled
relation of knots underneath our breathing
the creaking of floors the sun pulls us
up on sunbeam cranes no spectators
at our contortion dance piece of hours
anti-yoga metaphysics eleven bodies lie on
the corner of our pillow the moon rests
on the mattress the floor is harder
than cartwheel no hands I place my
raspberry between your pews your elbow
meditates into stones Clutch we are
under siege of hardness we need
bellies we need fat to be one body hip-
bone you cannot soften determined
things the same thought comes again
that there is no thinking (not yet) about
any of it we cannot sink into the
things beneath us make your lips
our blanket (I) move to sleep (you) in