The Post-Colonialist

The Post-colonialist
seizes my brain
with wires.
I hardly know
what I'm about,
if to accept the other
or balk
at deconstruction

Committing myself
to familiar angst,
I succumb . . .
and let literary theorists
and philosophers —
Derrida or Foucault,
Bhaktin or Barthes —
have their say.

Being still or silent,
my senses intact,
the syllables of intellect
or the imagination no less
capturing rhythms arcane
I aim only for the perfect line.

My muse's voice is yet quiet
as I take stock of memory,
a short cut to aesthetic enquiry —
distilling emotions through my veins
while I strike out with a hurrah
at this intellectual game
or past-time discourse.
Given to another country
without a European name,
I still consider origins,
muttering on about conquest
or simply pretending
with a buccaneer's spirit,
chasing after silver and gold;
my words salt-tongued,
and before a wavering plank,
I step along with a nerve,
or determined will all my own.

Yet theory will somehow
endure like hieroglyphics,
or last longer as I pretend
to answer questions about myself
with love or blandishment,
or what I've never known before:
truths too magnanimous,
or still more precious
though never really abstract.

Now I again balk at meaning
as emotions swirl at the limits,
and I say: Let's pretend
to make feelings always real.
Do I outlast
the dross of critical theory?

CYRIL DABYDEEN