from The Real Coulibri

Bev Braune

I

we must pause before the summit-climb to Coulibri we need to drink our hostess with eyes of displaced generations lifts a hand made of leather to the sky from this small verandah we can see the pot boiler Mt Soufrière ash oven Mistress of Boils preparing to launch Herself indiscriminately over the world’s verandahs for now the Ancient Witch of Fire is feeding whales in Antarctica She is patting the bellies of Pacific seals coddling plankton and sea urchin She is girdling the world with omens Her fire-whispers Her gutting bellyache of a cat contemplating the contours of fresh antelope She tells of a new coming-and-going folding it folding it into her skirts of tidal waves

II

Mt Soufrière is ploughing for kernels the old Tamo says Mt Soufrière is shivering to stretch its deep-sea roots unfolding the boot stamp of Monsieur Le Providence and Sir Crown The Peak who would meet at its summit and slide down its back into sharks’ nets Mt Soufrière is shivering for the cold spell of marching boats and flying metal for the ground of Deminan the oldest Taino says standing on the board-floor of the attic of the old plantation house I can feel the belly of that earth-sun rumbling rumbling with Her great grandmother’s gums to send women-marking-time fanning themselves with their lemonade hands into the boiling sea of Her trembling jaws