

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 Soufriere 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 Soufriere is ploughing for kernels the old Tamo says *Mt*
Soufriere 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 Soufriere 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