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## SIX POEMS BY LUCAS DE LIMA

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October 22, 2015

This week in the *PEN Poetry Series*, guest editor Dawn Lundy Martin features six poems by Lucas de Lima. About de Lima's work, Martin writes: "When reading Lucas de Lima, I cannot help but think of Nathaniel Mackey's interest in the Kaluli myth of the boy who, in lament, turns into a muni bird and half cries half sings a song mourning the annihilation of kinship.



De Lima's poetry vibrates a necessary dark song of cultural reclamation that presupposes its legitimacy, its rights as having come first. Because I am only excited by poems that have duende, I am tremendously excited by this work—duende in the black sounds that pierce through so much performative violence, so much nothingness."

"all i wanna say is that they don't really care about us"

irokô  
tree we imagine in memory of the slave who preferred  
200 lashes instead of fulmination  
live blood running down the trunk instead of latex in the thorax  
in pelourinho nothing grows & a child spirit offers popcorn  
sky not ablaze today but muffled  
with clouds steered by irokô  
a handicapped beggar observes with us the batucada  
in the square they whipped the slave who would not cut down  
the tree whose name fabricates thunder  
kernel of africa  
where jchrist was filmed as mj

irokô exploded  
his light skin off the drum

.

our foremothers  
absorbed by empire  
like crystals intact in our guts  
the open pustule  
from which our plumes extend  
so we layer our voice with another voice  
so we wrap our song with another song  
our structure organized as a flower forever petaling  
in the assassin wind  
the choppers of death here  
are not clandestine  
unlike the rivers under são paulo  
where we barely breathe  
where we barely breathe is where me & pinto  
put our beaks to the ground & suck out a scorpion  
crying night & day  
remembering a time when there was no night  
remembering the kayapó myth  
when there were no stars  
no horses but stories about horses  
we unsaddled ourselves inside

.

a savage melody airily repeating pinto pinto pinto  
until he never fades in a demon-packed world  
until he orders me about with the chicken essence  
of a medium beheading a rooster & smearing  
its blood on his seropositive body  
for a fee of 100 reais  
anchoring spirit society  
in a stronghold of whirlpooling clouds  
daubing pinto's flightless body black white red in spirals  
of permanent welts scars scrofulous inflammations  
crying

pinto

be immune to the sky pivoted against you

pinto

come back to our eyes when you die

.

i penetrate the depths of my race while amazons curse  
spectral flicker as the smoke of my blood  
my arms shackled by loggers who see me  
as the transparent, colorless wings of my friendship with pinto  
the way we love each other tho  
a bird batters against the cavity  
trying to break off  
forced to break out of the continental cage  
eggs of devastation we lay because

when pinto took a knife for me

his gash gave birth to feathers.

.

now pinto teaches me that inside time,  
there is more time

.

now pinto teaches me that inside me,  
there are more feathers

.

to believe him without falling into a pit of white fathers

to believe him while mothering my feathers

to believe in native mothers who gave birth to so many mongrels

in the mottled bloodbath of brazil

.

lava of reptiles

lava of birds

on my wing the larva of

cut-off tongues sparked

in the bundle of flames

a kaleidoscope

where mother jaguar's rope fuming orange forged

the open mouth of mundo where

my feather struck out

pinto fucked the heart of sky

broken clods the bloodletting of

deep-throated sacrifice

.

### pinto's dream of going blind

i run across the basin to my mother the mare  
our ligament invisibly fisted  
bleeding from my forehead in a thick stream  
lashes from the torrid zone blast my eyes  
crack my forehead  
sisters yelling goodbye  
shaking rattles singing at night  
fires kindled inside longhouses  
at the point where frontiers are at once  
in the air & in the light  
to stomp & beat the ground  
with my hoofhand  
means nada when mamãe whispers

"you are my blood-soaked floating child

vs.

the eurotrash anchor"

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