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La Nouvelle-Orléans AprèsL'Orage

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La Nouvelle-Orléans Après L'Orage

The cathedral bells' untimely toll is awkward,
 Giving me a headache.
 It is my first time hearing it from home.
 The streets are too quiet, no longer flashing hypnotic lights
 And beckoning with its rum-soaked, flirtatious breath.
 Even the horns of men who made cocktails out of rhythm
 And drugs now lay rusted on my doorstep,
 Their notes a mere gargle.

What happened to the Creole and Cajun aromas
 From mawmaw's kitchen, that loved to shake their hips
 And wave their handkerchiefs in the wind?
 And the hail of Greek gods that drank from the goblet
 Of lust, and threw coins onto the heads of babies?
 And the fairy dust-like potions from voodoo priest
 That kept us all in an unsatiated worship of black and gold?

The crows are grey now, and caw in a listless perch
 On great oaks that gasp to retell Noah's tale.
 The grass once green and fat with greed in the humid air
 Now brittle, and petrified by the moment's sudden enrapture.
 But there beneath lies mudbugs and slave bones,
 And the syncopated music of motherlands
 Beating their congos and timbales, massaging the earth
 With their festive feet and ash-crossed foreheads.
 Tunneling their way in song to the surface.

Tarnished beaded medallions hang from the wires above,
 Grasping back at the past, trying to restore its antique luster.
 And the stench of soiled pants and molded treasures attract flies
 That feed on the bland gumbo of a decaying culture.

Today my forbidden lover has drunk Juliet's liquor,
 Lying pale and breathless as we mourn her death.
 But tomorrow we will place cayenne on her lips
 And she will awaken refreshed, hungry, and ready to dance.

[*Trenise Robinson*]