

Rhythms 2008

Ayiti

by Julian Burnet

Barely dawn...
It is cool in the morning...
My shoulders ache from the cold
 The bare earth underneath me
A mat of banana leaves
Is my bed... Nothing to lay my head upon

Hunger pangs...
Strong Kafe... Lots of sugar
 Time to work...
 Place the large basin on my head
Herbs...
 Sour oranges... Sugarcane
A little bit of fabric... A few shiny buttons

Graceful...
 African Queen
Join the line ...
 Long, dusty road
 Into town
Don't speak... Save my energy
 It will be a long day

Afternoon sun...
 Beating down
Port au Prince
Brightly painted Tap Tap
Market women selling their wares
 Chromolithographs
Kennedy clothes...
Streets congested with bodies
Smoldering fires...
On the edge of the road
The smell of sewage...

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That runs into a pool of water
Children playing in it
Cite' Soliel
Thousands packed like sardines
Roofs of aluminum
Slowly roasting you in the heat

No food for my children
Mud Pies...
To send them to school...
I must pay
They must have uniforms...
Catholic school...

I have but a few gourds
Enough to buy a cup of rice ...
A cup of beans
We will eat tomorrow
Slavery...
Revolution...

Oppression...
We must fight for Democracy!
Libete!

Bonswa
Drummers drum
Prayers begin
All thanks to God...
A crowd of 200... Dancing in unison
Underneath the tunnel

Yanvolou...
Ayibobo!
The Iwa have arrived
Thank you Papa Danbala
Honor and Respect!
Dance until dawn...
The promise of a new day