

SWAN OF ITAMARATY

In the distance a swan beaks the air, twisting under
the palm-shade

Like an orange-fanged white serpent, striking from the pure
nest of its own body.

Then the wind unmoors the current, and the webbed feet
braid

The water with a lustrous jet ripple. Though the sinuous
arc

Of the neck and the silver breast open and feather the air,
the black eyes glint cruelly.

And no one knows whether evil or innocence drifts from
the slowly opened arms of prophetic dark.

Whether evil or innocence, no one knows. But the soft
fan-float

Of the wings draws a train of fascination across
the afternoon,

And even the fingers of the water would reach up and stroke
the irresistible white throat.