

Nathaniel Mackey

## Song of the Andoumboulou: 48

It was a freeway overpass we  
were on, an overpass east of  
La Brea. There we stood watching  
cars pass under us, desert  
flutes gargling wind at  
our  
backs, an overpass we stood  
on  
looking west... What there  
was wasn't music but music was  
there. Where it came from  
was nowhere, we heard it  
nonetheless, not hearing  
it  
before put us there... So we  
thought  
but wrongly thought, wrong to have  
thought we could. There we stood  
atop the world looking out at  
the world. L.A. it now was we  
were in...

Inside each car someone bore the  
world away, each a fleeting guest  
whose going we lamented, kin we  
could've sworn we saw... It was  
a bridge over the river of  
souls



Head I was hit upside. Curlicue wind  
filled with rasp and chatter, all  
unquiet, back and to the sides and  
front I stood on the overpass  
gazing out as did the rest. A caravan  
of  
cars, busses, trucks went by below.  
A congeries of trucks, busses, cars  
bemoaned Anuncia, her name now  
Nunca,  
borne away inside each one... Head  
I was hit upside... Branch I stood  
held up on... Ledge, putative loquat  
limb, east of La Brea... Branch I  
was  
hung up on... The bending of boughs  
was a blending of eyelessness and  
light, mending, my head was a host,  
B'Hest its visitor, lost in desert  
nearness otherwise won. Blinded by  
the glint of the sun, her glimpsed  
eye-  
tooth, the bending a being flutelike,  
pitted,  
pathic, put upon... Head I was hit  
upside, late Lone Coast reconnoiter's  
behest, distance's insinuating  
light...  
Swept and up to one side, hum inside my  
head's acceleration, breath blown on  
transverse flutes the floor I stood on,  
steadied  
me it seemed or so I dreamt... B'Hest had  
me sit, sat me down on the sidewalk, sad  
come to it so  
soon

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B'Hest had hold of us, no  
escape. Not moved if not by reread  
meaning, moved, music now,  
we  
saw, beside the point... Late  
awakening, late arrival by hooklight.  
Late feeling I fell back on. A bit  
of blood was in the wind, *rugs*  
burnt  
*Persian red*, ash in the air  
again

Wife dead, daughter's father's hand  
bloody, not to be called husband we  
saw... Abruptly back from thirty years'  
distance, glimpsed ember gone out again  
on.

Something we saw we didn't see we saw,  
B'Hest held it, love's late recension  
we  
saw... Reminiscent autumn, reminiscent  
fruit. Anuncia's proffered loquat, mouth  
an hermetic pout, Anuncia's mouth  
perfect,  
pillow-talk  
sweet



Spark might've been ash that  
spoke or might've been spoked, a  
mango seed the size of an open  
mouth

in the middle of the street,  
seed I saw sitting curbside  
covered with dust and soot,

run

over how many times who could

say...

As if no longer on the overpass  
now, as if on the freeway, ran  
from a runaway B'Us but it ran  
with me, a worm in the beak  
of the bird in the singer's

throat,

Wemba's birdlilt waver not yet  
there though it would someday  
be. Something we heard it  
all but seemed we saw... Something  
we'd soon be bereft of, B'Hest held

it

as well, the imprint of crevice  
and curve the admission of cloth  
that we wore nothing underneath.  
The admission of cloth's inexhaustible  
draw, spark long since dispensed

with

ignited, rough, incendiary husk... A

thin

crease cut the wind, a cyst of  
emptiness, a mouth, a wrinkle

witnessing what it remained to  
be  
seen. Thin impression of bones the  
admission of cloth that we were  
bodies underneath, stirring up upon  
as  
if by  
salt



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Udhrite arrest echoed Udhrite  
embrace but nothing stopped. The river  
of souls rolled on and was us and  
we stood watching. Legs looked at  
from  
afar stirred up dust... The  
admission of cloth we were bones  
underneath went on repeating,  
see-thru boon, x-ray bounty,  
peepshow  
sun... Later motes took the place  
of stars, heads we were hit  
upside turned inside out, outside  
farther out... Stood or before  
we  
knew it were standing, a First  
and Future Church of the Mango  
Seed's late birth, stood, suddenly  
standing,  
nothing  
stopped