

Hoo Doo Interests

ALLISON WHITTENBERG

MaMa Fontaine stirs gumbo in a big rusty pot
telling me that joy is squashing a pregnant roach.
She is a jailbird,
an ex-lounge singer,
and a literary agent (who won't sign me).
She wonders if it is just some quirk,
or does insanity truly run parallel to our family.

I count the sky's stars under a non-tropical
night on Harriet Island, but I am reminded of nothing.

PaPa Fontaine shoots his mouth off
like a blind man with a pistol.
Yakking about some cataclysmic battle,
lying about being John St. Kits Wayne,
the outlaw Cowboy of the Caribbean.
A sea lion land-locked, he is presently unemployable.

He longs to go back to his island,
but MaMa is too Americanized to get with that.

The criminal glam that they were both in.

The corrosive anti-culture.

A self-stroking soul world.

A milling population of pimps and chippies.

Con men and preachers.

Matriarchs and gaudy prophets.

A neo hoo doo manifesto that is not in the travel brochures.

Tourist only ride the tame horses.

They honeymoon at the Holiday Inn

where the sky meets the sea.

They say "How about that bobsled team Ha Ha.

Yet, my folks will never go back to Jamaica

and make it their own.