

### **When the Tourists Come**

For a moment, there is a small, brown man  
weaving his way  
through the veins of the market place.

He wears the straw fedora of old Latin men,  
and he tosses back a sample shot of the rum  
that is meant for the tourists and for the rich  
that live behind white villa walls.

He walks with the graceful fury of  
the abuellos,

moving in between

a boxer's shuffle

and a soldier's promenade,

making demands of the earth

until he stops for a moment

and watches the guitar curves

of your body.

You are searching

for our souvenir trophies,

and when your arms are full

of woven dolls

and lacquer ashtrays,

and you are going to the counter to pay,

he looks to me and he says a word in Spanish  
that is lost in the gentle leeward winds.

I flail furiously,

trying to clutch

the fluttering pieces

and sew them together

before he can use the magic  
of old Latin men and  
disappear like smoke  
in the Caribbean heat.