

The Interloper

Beneath inverted black fir jungle
of water hyacinth roots underweaving
my hidden bayou, my diver's lamp
the only hold with my world, I disturb
a concert of stripes: Hundreds
of inch-long fishes silver-slanting
right or left as my hand directs.
A king size mud cat like Genghis Khan
eyes me from the olive drab floor.
And overhead! My lost boat! Impounded
since last summer-- clamped listing
in a wet/dry vise, sun-half of bulbous green
vases feigning innocence with flowers--
night-half of fringe and garland chain,
propeller upholstered in velvet.
I rip away the slimy grip and feel
hairy stalactites creep closer, determined
as topside kudzu. The gasoline-fed screw might
thresh a few feet before losing. A spring army
of trees wades out to make a stockade.
Roman-helmeted herons patrol
the narrowing perimeter above with lances.
Here, the mighty Khan rules, guarded by turtles.
And I, lingering, slave to light and lungs,
must fight myself free.