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## Drinking Mojitos in Cuba Libre

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## DRINKING MOJITOS IN CUBA LIBRE

by *Harryette Mullen*

"My mojito in La Bodeguita. My daiquiri in El Floridita." A postcard of fidelity shaking hands with earnest money. Lost in the streets of Havana, gasping for breath *como un pez sin agua*. As hot as it is, as black as can be, as dark as this combustible star. *Sí, hace calor, pero* only *turistas* wear big brims or ultraviolet lenses. You hot? You thirsty? You buy us mojitos? You bring your *yanqui dolor*. We show our splendid squalor. Milk for baby, you give me dollar. You black, we black. See my scar from the war in Angola. Still working for a Cuba libre. Tropicola's sweeter than Coke. Mix rum and sugar with sweat of a slave. We work for pesos and beg for your stinking dollar. I'll show you where Hemingway wrote, the bar where he sipped his swizzle. You'll owe me a mojito. *Que se vayan los gusanos*. Crush with a pestle. Add rumba. Stir briskly with a drop of African blood.

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This poem has previously appeared in *X-Tra* 4.3 and *VOLT*. Reprinted by permission of the author.



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On the Patio at the UNEAC