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St Croix: the Haunts of Castle Coakley, I, and: Massacre:
(For those whose voices cry for obelisks of remembrances)

Dannabang Kuwabong

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ST CROIX: THE HAUNTS OF CASTLE COAKLEY, I*

by Dannabang Kuwabong

I walked over to the shed
where two old Cruzians shared a rum
under the shade of the neem
enquired about the road to Castle Coakley
and in soft Cruzian, they spoke:

“just keep pushing forward
soon you will find ancient footprints
set by those who marched there
to whip lash and chain fire
broken shoulders on hot boulders.”

then in soft echoes a gargled laughter escaped their lips
I walked on wondering

at last I rounded a bend
I climbed the hill of history
where once stood a house of power
but all that remains to be seen
are these renegade stones
sprawled dejected everywhere
while the revenge of cane
shoots through broken chimneys
in these rusty plantation boilers

is standing I standing quiet quiet
magnified by chants of crickets
whistling to dance of noon heat
under a dying sea grape:

* “St Croix: the Haunts of Castle Coakley, I” was originally published in *Voices from Kibuli Country* (TSAR Publications, 2013). Reprinted with permission from the author.

CALLALO

“where once the proud Dane from Copenhagen
where once the proud French from Paris
where once the proud Spaniard from Andalucía
where once the proud British from London

defeated their fear of beauty in a bottle of rum
boasted in powers of their tribes
backed by powder and canon ball
only iguanas now parade in yellow bandanas
claiming territory in pitched battles of the tail!”

so is walking I walking softly softly
is looking I looking new dreams
come rise from ancestral quarters
where once fungi and breadfruit
sustained the hope of freedom
sustained the salvation promised
waves a torn flag in an afternoon breeze

near these ruins of Great Houses
no image of Buddhoe rises
no memory of the slave boy
waving the Union Jack
in the march on Frederiksted
proclaiming on that July noon
“any flag wid don do for get awa fridom”
as Von Schoeton bowed.

MASSACRE:
(For those whose voices cry for obelisks of remembrances)*

by Dannabang Kuwabong

a fitting name for Black Atlantic places
how the name recalls its stories
this is my third ride through her arterial roads
at least some local artist
thinks it is about tomorrow
and painted these scenes of history:

see. here to your right
African ancestors cutting cane in canefield

there as in the Middle Passage
Africans merge with Caribs in pain

there in red uniforms French invaders grin
as a British trooper bayonets
a kneeling Chief Warner on the neck
driving the steel point through his chest
while other troopers applaud

all around the dead bodies of the innocent:
baby bodies. woman bodies. man bodies. many bodies.
all sacrifices to appease the hate
of an English son for a British father
who denied him the throne of Dominica

what crime did the Caribs commit
against the envious sons of Albion and of Gaul
they who welcomed them and gave them peace
only wanted to share their land with the foreigner

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but they died, the Caribs died
they died so we might know death
death by whip lash
death of our tongue
death of our culture
death of self to self

so here we stand
nodding our heads
failing in comprehension
unwilling to understand
afraid to shed tears for the dead

whose presences tickle our dreams
for this was not the only massacre
all over the Antilles peaks
massacres await still to be mourned
whose voices cry for an obelisk of remembrance

it is our turn to mourn
for the massacres of our dreams
by these voices from beyond death
shouting by the wayside in our journeys
showing us the routes to Belles