

Alan Sullivan

Harvest

His grief is a house he should never have built,
an orchard untended, flowers that wilt,
a lane that a downpour churns into flood
where his axle will crack in bottomless mud.

He plods his round like an ox in a yoke,
harnessed forever to fields that he broke.
Hailstorms or locusts ruin his crops.
He can't put them right, though he works till he drops.

His forebears were Nordlanders, born to endure
fishing or farming—the toil of the poor.
For them, a stavkirk sufficed as a church;
their Garden of Eden was bracken and birch.

He put them away like plates in a chest
shipped over sea and hauled to the West.
He staked out more land than a man can afford,
but love only pines for mist on a fiord.

The shoulder that bars half of the bed—
why did it turn? Was it something he said?
Or maybe his gambles, debts, and arrears
furrowed a face and streaked it with tears.

It's worse than winter—the silence each night—
the shuttered eyes—lamps without light.
And who bears the blame?—the hauler of wood,
when the blaze he kindled goes out for good.

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Long Bay Jump

Sun drop down with a flash of green.
Moon lift up, and the palm tree lean.

Jack fish bake in banana wrap.
Pi-dog snap up the table scrap.

*Full of the moon, ganja and rum,
Long Bay jump 'til the morning come.*

Steel band shake up the Bomba Shack;
rooster crow and the rafter crack.

Rasta man blow Jamaica toke.
Road Town van fetch the hotel folk.

*Full of the moon, ganja and rum,
Long Bay jump 'til the morning come.*

Sun lift up as the moon drop down.
Church bell ring, and the preacher frown.

“All you sinner now kneel and pray.
Hear no more what the Devil say.”

*Full of the moon, ganja and rum,
Long Bay jump 'til the morning come.*

Alan Sullivan was born in New York City, educated in Connecticut, lived in Minnesota and North Dakota, retired to a boat in Florida. Founder of The Deep End poetry forum at Eratosphere. He blogs at www.seablogger.com.