

Kyllikki Brock Persson

Wood Wasp on Metal Sill

I watch the wood wasp, and it does not know—cannot comprehend—that I exist. It trundles forward, focused on the window sill beneath, antennae alternating in brushing the burnished metal. I could tell it from where I sit that there is neither anything edible nor otherwise useful to be found there, but how could I hope to communicate that to this focused little person? I can only hope that some psychical reverberation from the singing, indigo strings in my heart could touch the wasp's sienna soul, wherever it lies, and that we might meet again after this life has dropt us.

Attention suddenly piqued, the wasp stops. Leaving the functional prostration of searching, it raises itself on forelegs and holds its head high in the air, throbbing abdomen uptilted. The arch of its back is sensual, and I can see that to fuck like a wasp must be an explicit, utilitarian act with the passion of a billion supernovas.

Pride of Barbados

[Tiger] Woods had rented out the entire Sandy Lane Hotel in St. James and its 112 rooms for his guests for several days. The rooms at the hotel go for \$700 to \$8,000 per night, according to the hotel's website.

—CNN

The warmth of the sun
penetrates only barely the canopy.
Beneath, the small house squats
like a feral creature reeling
from a curious meanderer, the kind of animal
that, feeling trapped and threatened,
strikes out, bites,
only to be kicked or shot in retaliation.
This specimen is too sickly to defend itself,
the planks of the verandah missing and listing like
the teeth of an old obeah hag,
one of the twin jalousie windows boarded up and blind
to the breadfruit and mangoes moldering
in the untended front garden.

These, not the ruins of a precolonial *bohío*
but the weathered chattel house in which you live,
the bedroom where you birthed your sons,
the kitchen where your daughters helped you
cook cassava: as you mixed in coconut oil, they
took turns stuffing banana leaves.
An errant sheet of corrugated iron hangs in the
curling branches of a nearby mahogany tree—
a neighbor patched the hole over your bedroom with
palm fronds and spare planks, and now the rain
doesn't fall so heavily above you while you sleep.

And while you sleep in your house poised on stone feet,
he sleeps in a luxury suite
where the cost is four digits and
where the minimum stay is seven nights and
where the bouquet left daily on his pillow consists of
heads of flamboyant and frangipani and wild cinnamon,

none of which would know one another as neighbors
if not for the meddling of Europeans.

Wild cinnamon does not even grow on your side
of the island, and, though your eyes once-upon-
a-time held the luminescence of the frangipani blossom's
heart, they have sobered with age: but what
does bloom in your garden is pride of Barbados.

