

dance the dance of rippling waters
as now our history gathers
the foliage hold their palms to the skies
faces frowning look up to the skies
in our lands where laughter weeps unknowing

dance with us a dance of the future
they will not let us sit in peace
nor let our eyelids droop in earned rest
and the flood comes that must

they will not let the raindrops say
rain time is peace time
for the bursting forth of joys.

(1974)

Maria Manuela Margarido

You Who Occupy our Land

Do not lose sight
of the skipping children:
The black khaki garbed snake
struts before the hut door.
The breadfruit trees they cut down
to leave us hungry.
The roads they watch
for fleeing cacao.
Tragedy we already know:
the flaming hut
firing up the palm-thatched roof,
the smoke smell
mixing into the smell of
guando fruit and death.
We know ourselves,
sorters of tea from hampers
bark-strippers of the cashew trees.
But you, faintly off-colour
masks of men
barely empty ghosts of men
you who occupy our land?

Translated from the Portuguese by Allan Francovich

Socope

The long green grasses of my island
are now the oca shade
mist of life,
on the backs bent over the load