

Dear Julien

do you know

how many gates  
there are  
between Port-au-Prince  
and Paris?

how many bags  
how many basements  
how many hens, powders  
& propulsions

how many signs on the walls  
and in the migrated bodies

how many towns, kingdoms,  
languages, robbed divinities

in a certified-black heart

how much desire to (h)eroticise  
BANM KALOU BANM  
smack smack smack  
the Atlantic-subway

in Pigalle right now  
a few cabri skins  
have extended their palm  
above a forest that whispers

a back channel  
shells rice grains  
and peas ready to intone  
vows of devotion

a collection of murmurs  
pours out like hot streams  
curled up at the foot of a piton  
and suddenly spat out  
in the midst of a ceremony  
in a puddle of rum

do you remember  
the birds between the fingers  
a big snake around the neck  
like a wedding ring  
that unfathomable Mathilda  
it's here that she dances

there are so many of them  
for Papa Legba Elegbara Eshu  
holding hands with one another  
dressed in pieties  
forbidden to others

how could we not venerate in turn  
these women fallen like rain  
on the streets of Paris  
where our own feet walk  
all the paths of faith  
where perhaps our parents once  
passed

today, on this day  
it is for them  
that the storm will rumble  
summoned after so many calls  
from the devoted hands  
that work backed by the wind  
to make the Seine overflow  
its bridges

*funeral fanfares and canon salutes*  
for the tragedy of kings and queens  
dancing to infinity  
singing with a same tremor  
*nap goumen jouk mayi mi jouk tan nou libere*

Yours,  
Estelle