

TO A FISHERMAN GONE

Thwarted in life's beating heart now,
And now no later still
Slacked to eternity, lost to this life
Of grit and steel,
A silent past breath rides
The ocean spray he rode
In ribbed bark, snatching his dreams
His veins swelled black silver
In the salt sun.
Laughing a catch, the bow heaved the skyline
Squeezing his eagle-eyes to grin
Where the tail of the ray-fish smash the hull.

Charles his friend drowned,
He swam the ocean, till
The coral sank grieved, and
The land rose pushing the waves from the sand.

Saltfish and fig and breadfruit
Oiling the air, from St. Vincent,
Crossing the Trinidad main,
He came and settled
Raising my awe, struck
By tales, beautiful days gone
Never to return,
And singing the promised land.

I sat on his knee,
And dreamed the while he spoke
And sang.
The wind will blow across my land,
Pluck flowers of the silk cotton or cedar
To scatter wide and far,
Even in the furthest lands,
To await the season of the winds.

LeRoy Clarke

1967.