

Nancy Anne Miller

## Blue Blood

White as the fresh meat of the Pompano, Bream,  
Jacks which swam turquoise waters then were  
displayed at Miles Market lying on cubes of ice,  
scaled and up for sale. Jeremy Gorham's legs  
above cashmere socks, below flannel pants  
still worn in August, were pale, never brown,  
blue English blood chilled his nine year old body.  
He dragged the home country around in  
his lungs, sacks of cold blowing across Devon.  
When his face freckled, it smarted into gnat bites,  
as if prickly heat stung cheeks red. Never  
much at school, bookish, a collector of stamps,  
he favoured lands filled with the sun: Africa,  
India, The British Caribbean. His stacked Manila  
envelopes golden as a tan he never had. His Gothic  
home more grey, forlorn among Bermudian  
pastel houses. Spires jutted up, the tips of bat wings.

## Cadbury's

As if even eating chocolate  
should be done sensibly,  
broken at right angles,  
Cadbury's came with  
a grid to help one do  
the kindly thing which  
is to share with a friend.

We counted them squarely,  
to make sure all was fair,  
but never added up how  
the cocoa tree peaks between  
five and ten years; just like  
the Guyanese child labourers,  
before losing all sweetness.

## The Greening of Money

I think of the years when the Queen was  
on the pound, then on the local dollar.

Her crowned head a Neptune as she dripped  
jewels over the imagery of local beaches.

Money curled like a wave in the island heat  
but she always kept me afloat.

The shilling, and the half-crown bore  
her profile as if she shared her fortune.

Now she is small as a stamp on the corner  
of an envelope from a country faraway.

The long-tail flies, the angel fish swims  
and the whistling frogs sing out across

the bright currency. The first inhabitants of  
The Somer's Isles have earned a local interest.

## Emancipation

What does language look like  
when it frees a human? Do words  
snap apart on the page in broken chains?

I visit the Bermuda Archives, put on  
gloves white as the ones help used  
to clean family silver, clear the table.

The aged brown documents wrinkled  
as single bills from the twenty  
million pounds slave owners received.

It is sewn together with a red ribbon  
which separates into the tip of a whip-  
the colour of blood a reminder.

Stands out over the writing below  
which rises in waves in carefully  
executed longhand. The letters  
slant and move forward from  
the seas which carried boats full  
of bound humans to the islands.

## Going To Town

No one listens to the woman who sits,  
talks to herself in front of the ferry terminal,  
lips wriggling worms below  
the spare grassy patch of her hair.

At the end of the public bench where  
she sits the cigarette disposal bin has  
a lit one with smoke trailing on its front,  
pivotal as a bird diving into an iron lung.

As I cross over Front Street in Hamilton  
the traffic light beeps, chirps like  
a young chick. I am wary of black hooded  
persons—the crows in our midst.