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Eartha Kitt at the Araneta Colesium Poet on His Twenty-Sixth Birthday

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TWO POEMS by Rolando Tinio

Eartha Kitt at the Araneta Coliseum

In Baudelairesque, love, like a cage
With her, bears no taint of beast
But body's primal bodiness,
As if the theatre of her sex

Held in the heart of amulets
Enacted in our eyes a presence
Drawn from, no longer resident
In unimaginative flesh.

I too think of Jeanne Duval,
How on the poet's couch she lightly
Crouched in deadly sloth of grace
To climb his apogee of stare:

Towering eyes, like cupolas
Or thunderclouds that darkly threaten
Shattering but keep their burst
Reined in steel tumescence of art.

Such as you are: Negress who,
Singing in long dress, shape of asp,
Color of lioness, preaches all
We need to know of nakedness.

Poet on His Twenty-Sixth Birthday

I of jugglery and jest
Before a court of mythic lords
Discovered how this art at best
Had been the swallowing of swords.

As if I too had lost my tongue,
I wove in looms of burning thread
To spread a fiery tale among
Cold processions of the dead.

I twittered riddles like a bird
And mimed the gestures of the wise.
But jester and juggler spoke no word
To bring no tears to no one's eyes.

Though promenade across a wire
Unfolded parable of sorts,
Though I escaped the prongs of fire
By twist and turn of trick retorts,

Words like fowl caged in air
Could not unfortify the trope.
Swords inhabited everywhere,
I walked forever rigid rope.

Now blood that bloomed in metaphor
Unseeds the crimson universe,
Performs a myth of death—the lore
Of Hyacinth told in reverse.