

Materiel

The harsh palmetto,
dark and bright in the sun,
has fronds that would comb the brain.

Its seething clumps seem
impolite and obscene

to

man

with

his

love

of

ranks

and

of

rows.

But the berries make good wine
and the fans make good mats
and the shade makes good
rattlesnakes.

Oolongapoo

A sailor, frowzed and shaveless,
pinched awake by last night's whore
(Hey! Pat-Boone boyfriend!
drink a beer and go to work!),
strides bayward, evading garbaged pools,
an object of concern to slender curs.

Runs the night through his mind like silk;
her tipsy prayers at a bedroom shrine,
frayed honest panties, a shared bath ...
until memories of mutual tenderness
lodge beneath his collar like ice
and leap him into a ten-centavo taxi,
frightened that he cares.

— Raymond Ó'Hara

Tampa, Florida