Currents

Stephen Dunn
The rich girls walked arm in arm, untouchable, big silver crucifixes between their breasts, while the men in outdoor cafes smacked their lips at the country girls too poor to forget their bodies. Each night my blonde wife and I would leave our house for shrimp and baby eels, or sherry and langostinas, and the men turned and turned, whispered and made gestures. The ships came in. The whores from San Fernando vied with the whores from Cadiz. At Carnival, amidst the crowds, it was possible to touch a rich girl’s ass. Sundays it all exploded; the bulls dipped into the horses, the matadors into the bulls, then the streets filled up again with a wild vicariousness. Late that summer, I’d skin dive for moray eels. You had to anger them so they’d charge, shoot the spear straight down their throats after the huge mouths opened. I was never brave enough to catch one, though I wrote a poem one dreamy morning about bringing an eel back to my wife, how she took it from me and held it.