

Masthead Logo

The Iowa Review

Volume 26
Issue 2 *Summer*

Article 62

1996

Song of the Andoumboulou: 33

Nathaniel Mackey

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Mackey, Nathaniel. "Song of the Andoumboulou: 33." *The Iowa Review* 26.2 (1996): 132-138. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.4628>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

had he
 been able, rapt, irreligious,
 no jihad . . .
 The we they'd have been,
 dreamt
 remnant it became, what
 we saw was all hearsay it
 seemed. Theirs the eventual
 audience's, not only his,
 hers . . .
 Audible wish to be seen. Taken
 eye turned on itself . . .
 "Answered
 in kind, sighs alone would have
 cracked our ribs," he heard her
 whisper, words he'd have
 whispered in turn had his
 tongue not stuck . . .
 Theirs
 the cast-out, eventual
 crux, cornerstone. Stood
 as again she went by
 without speaking,
 sang,
 "Went by without speaking,"
 out
 of reach

•

Only what of it he could
 put into words could he
 rescind. Is remained is,
 implacable. Tree was
 what its
 name would be, only were
 wood water, he her self-described

apostle, hand cupping an abstract
 breast, wanting the
 world . . .

Ran to no end but to've
 drifted somewhere distant,
 horse whose being ridden rode
 them both . . . Bedded
 down
 in a burnt-out house,
 wicks lit
 to Ogun. Each a cracked
 egg, coaxed air, low-pitched
 ignition, hit by their
 below-the-belt abruptness,
 won
 by their below-the-waist
 allure . . . Said of that world,
 about
 to leave it, so much less than
 we'd been led to expect.
 To've thought at all,
 thought of it as legged,
 what where there was reached
 only
 in thought, what reach remonstrant,
 strode as though lit within amber,
 andouboulouous legs, fossilized
 light . . .

So that the dreamthing we heard spoke
 thru more than one mouth.
 The
 Soon-Come Congress of Souls
 was now in session. Hafez
 blew a chicken-bone clarinet
 he'd
 brought back from Iran . . . Dreamt
 writ calibrated our eclipse,

what-said we. It was an out
sound we echoed, broken branch
reckoned by we

.

Stra Hajj the path we took, roust
what got us there. We who were the
we they'd have been, dreamt
concupiscence, the Soon-Come Congress
no sooner there than
gone . . .

Parts pulled apart, wandered,
Stra Palace the place they knew
next . . . An asthmatic wind infused
what floor lay under them.

Nay
was what their name would be,
Zra's
raw-throated flute . . . Words
don't go there, they said,
no sooner said than they were
there, albeit there defied location . . .
City they'd been told they'd someday
get to,
eventual city known as By-and-By . . .
That there was a war going
on they'd forgotten,
"Blues
for the Fallen" on the box
notwithstanding, rapt,
remnant
heat the one flame
they saw

Another he, no longer the same
though related. She, of whom
the same could be said . . .

An asthmatic
wind underneath it all, Hoarse
Chorus, they who were the would-be
we she projected, hand so abruptly
out from under her dress, her
sniffed finger's lewd

report . . .
Lifted a finger she'd stroked
herself with up to
just above his upper lip,
whispered,
"Smell it," that this would
come back to him again and
again come back to him,

more
than he could make any sense
of, abrupt
move the abrasive nay so
insisted on, seemed it
so insisted on, only,

even

so

And so told us how far it was
though we thought it,

return

to Stra Palace, Jah Hajj.

Madame

Zzaj the name she now took

to be done with naming,

names

no longer slide might such be

so . . .

A sudden rain, so we ducked
under leaves. Wood became shed,

meaning

Tree. Trunk, unembraceable,

beckoned,

wide girth we'd have given the

world to've been one with, run

with, roots

above ground

Stra Hajj was behind us now.
 It seemed it was a train we
 were on, church we were
 in,
 stuck voices all but
 tugged us down . . .
 Plucked strings made the
 floorboards buckle, tenuous
 hold on
 what we had more tenuous.
 Hoarse
 Chorus the congress of souls
 we exacted, soul serenade,
 what-said
 surmount . . .
 So that the he
 we heard sing stayed
 with us, haunted
 us, allowed us to move
 like music,
 but in
 boxcars, hobos it
 seemed