

## Childhood Tracks

Eating crisp fried fish with plain bread.

Eating sheared ice made into 'snowball'  
with syrup in a glass.

Eating young jelly-coconut, mixed  
with village-made wet sugar.

Drinking cool water from a calabash gourd  
on worked land in the hills.

Smelling a patch of fermenting pineapples  
in stillness of hot sunlight.

Smelling mixed whiffs of fish, mango, coffee,  
mint, hanging in a market.

Smelling sweaty padding lifted off a donkey's back.

Hearing a nightingale in song  
in moonlight and sea-sound.

Hearing dawn-crowing of cocks, in answer  
to others around the village.

Hearing the laughter  
of bare feet children carrying water.

Hearing a distant braying of a donkey  
in a silent hot afternoon

Hearing palm trees' leaves rattle  
on and on at Christmas time.

Seeing a woman walking in loose floral frock.

Seeing a village workman with bag and machete  
under a tree, resting, sweat-washed.

Seeing a tangled land-piece of banana trees  
with goats in shades cud-chewing.

Seeing a coil of plaited tobacco  
like rope, sold, going in bits.

Seeing children toy-making in a yard  
while slants of evening sunlight slowly disappear.

Seeing an evening's dusky hour lit up  
by dotted lamplight.

Seeing fishing nets repaired between canoes.

*James Berry*