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Pancho Villa's Daughter

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Calabash: A Journal of Caribbean Arts and Letters is an international literary journal dedicated to publishing works encompassing, but not limited to, the Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. The Journal is especially dedicated to presenting the arts and letters of those communities that have long been under-represented within the creative discourse of the region, among them: Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, Maroon societies, and the Asian and Amerindian societies of the region. Calabash has a strong visual arts component.

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Maggie Harris

PANCHO VILLA'S DAUGHTER

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Pancho Villa's daughter
fresh from a continent
where blood dries quickly on the plains
young as a suckling spruce
old as Mayans

scatters Euros now
stacks them neatly in numerical order
behind a glass window
through eyes as grey as the rain.

You'd never know it,
behind that glass partition
with its beech trim
and bronzed name-plate

sits a daughter of the plains
trading dollars for escudos
efficiently advising on Tensas, ISAs
blue chip files and overseas investments.

The South London accent
wavers on a trade-wind
ushered briskly through the swing doors,
as dry as the yucca straining

for a square of blue.
But, don't talk to her of open spaces
of savannahs rippling
like land eels in the heat;

don't talk to her of
vaqueros voiceless as vagrants
with 1969 on a movie screen.
Her face will shut as swiftly
as a time-lock,
will look past you
as cold as morning rain.