

Natasha Marin

MALADE IMAGINAIRE



Back home his mamá is still sweat-stuck
to a folding chair. Her wide bottom welted
by bands of plastic and unrelenting time.
She examines the point in her palm
where her life-line fades and her son returns
with feet heavy as the yellow icebox carcass—
molting curls of sun-bleached paint.

He supposes that she is not thinking of him—
her big baby boy cut from her own
skin after 14 hours of rib-scraping mutiny.
She is only there—hoping for an Indian daughter-
in-law to make *douglas* with, so she can watch
the arch of their feet stiffen
like wet candle wax.

It is now 10:44 p.m. and Monsieur Duránge
is reading post-colonial theory. He is not
mesmerized by the machete-streak of orange
makeup along her chin. No part of him crumples
like her shoulders in that hot crevice of a kitchen.

She is not fingering the damp scarf of her hair
when he leaves ink prints on clean pages.

Calabash

A JOURNAL OF CARIBBEAN ARTS AND LETTERS

Volume 4, Number 2 / Spring-Summer 2007

Information about this work:

MALADE IMAGINAIRE

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Start Page: 31

URL: <http://www.nyu.edu/calabash/vol4no2/0402031.pdf>

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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Calabash: A Journal of Caribbean Arts and Letters
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