

# C&H AT CARQUINEZ STRAIT

PHILLIP BARRON

Wind is in the cane. Come along.  
Damp air split by the train  
carries the clank of wheels  
on rails and hiss of macadam gripping  
tires through cracked upper windows.

Cane leaves swaying, rusty with talk.  
Island meets mainland where the dock's  
crane carts crushed canebrakes  
from cargo holds to copper vats,  
press and pop stalks' sweet drops.

Scratching choruses above the guinea's squawk.  
Brick and glass house clockwork, punchcards,  
schedules where machinations enslave  
time, smooth paths past Hephaestus  
pounding molten imports, forging pure sugar.

Wind is in the cane. Come along.  
Foghorn blast from the lighthouse pier  
throws away waves in the dusk's black sails.  
Next to nothing stands a spigot  
from which water falls without landing.

*contains lines from Carma, by Jean Toomer.*