

CANTO A LA HABANA

Thank you, Cuba, for Fidel
One of the sanest men in history
Who stood up to Goliath,
Shouting the poems of Marti.

Thank you, Cuba, for the *sones*
Bringing Caribbean sunshine
To the First of May in Bruges.
Thank you for the men who play

Music of the nineteen-twenties
Many *gringos* must have heard:
Sexteto Matancero, Sexteto
Occidente, Sexteto Nacional.

This schoolboy danced one night
Tight in a black woman's arms
When his ship put into port.
Dios mio! we had some sport.

Later, a stop in Jamaica.
Rum, and a big cigar
Under a wandering star.
Venezuela, here we come!

Fidel, you were not yet in power.
Bush was a glint in his father's eye.
The atomium had not reached the sky.
The Russians were learning to fly.

Thank you for Nicolas Guillén
And the voice of black America,
As I slice a breakfast mango
In an almost tropical country

Riddled with right wing politics
And meaningless music festivals.
Thanks for reminding us, Fidel
There is still water in the well.

MARCUS CUMBERLEGE
The hot spring of 007