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X*

by Édouard Glissant

Depths, oh tides.
Birds, dying beside us, with this sound from yesteryear.
Villages, weary rivers, so many fruits, so many swords.

You become a mirror of this visage, sea glory
As a raw downpour between life and ourselves
And the wind desolate in its madness oh wind.

You become a visage where the mirror fades out and you
More ardent than our voices in this trace of time
Become the voice of this hunter hearing you.

—translated by Mary Ann Caws

* "X" was originally published in French in *Sel noir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983). The English translation is published with permission from Gallimard.