

MOIRA MACDOUGALL

Eartha Kitt Goes to Lunch  
(Toronto, 1998)

—a 'found' poem

She storms into town looking like  
James Brown in drag and does  
the celebrity lunch announcing  
from her restaurant chair,  
"I carry food with me, just in case!"

Puffing her Marlborough Ultralight  
she arcs back like an angry cat,  
hair growing larger, "I have no colour,  
I have no race, I am mulatto.  
I was given away. I remember,"  
she inhales and puffs again,

"I'd follow the birds and snakes, the deer  
and eat whatever they ate—  
wild grapes and scallions, hickory nuts,  
dandelions and the soft inner leaf  
of the cattail; urging sour juice  
from a purple flowering weed.

When I moved to the city, I ran away  
and used my ingenuity: snagging  
loose change under subway grates with sticks  
primed with tossed, wet gum. I slept  
on rooftops, in doorways. I know hunger."

Fed by public adoration, she  
never refuses an autograph,  
“That’s my bread and butter! Diamonds  
and furs are wonderful but give me land.  
I know how to survive from dirt.”