

Iquitos, Peru

Northeast are capybaras,
Macaws, caymans,
And leaf-chewing men
With little raiment
Who have no fear
Of piranhas in streams—
That's for elsewhere
Where tourists dream.
The leaf, by the way,
Is sheer cocaine
Which after ten years
Addicts the men
Who carry blowguns
And such long spears,
Both reach almost
To Lima's concerns.
Now in the dark hut
The women jig;
Men can-can and expect
Some sales, or beg.
I wear my shoes
Against parasites.
The jungle grows full
Of them or us.

Edward Locke