

Sorting Furs

The furs rich women wear
Are filth in the ship's hold
A clot of rancid hair.

Yet are they priced and sold
And in Great Trinity Street
Make profits manifold.

The merchants there smell sweet.
Their shirts are gleaming white,
Their food is fit to eat.

With fur in mouth and ears
And stink inside his head
And only his heart sweet

My uncle who is dead
Spent forty poisoned years
Sorting furs for bread.

JACK BEECHING.

Reading Nicholas Guillen in Translation

Came
he from the West Indies speaking
many tongues — all tongues
in his manhood speaking all
Spanish German
Creole all spoken
and sign languages
Came
he from Cuba
Came
he the hero
dark of his world's shadow
lithe of the rumba
broad-browed of his Africa his Spain
his American his Ocean
bright-eyed of his sun
Came
he from his Cuba

NICHOLAS GUILLEN

Came
he man-tongued
woman-winning tearing
down the town advertisement
the New York coloured photo
the Balance Sheet
of the Big White Company
Came
he from his singing Cuba

Came
he and sang:
Our sugar is bitter
hunger is sweeter
easier to win
easy as sin
for an empty man

But the lights of town
are hard as stone
as a body of bone
when-mind grows brighter
and fist tighter

Sang
he as I sat and he
came and with his hand
covered hand and book
Listen
said he
and sure his song
rose all over the place
all-tongu'ed with the grand
accompaniment of Cuban band
balalaika zither cello
mouth-organ penny-whistle
drum drum drum
West-Indian wise
Smiles
he as I hum sing
Shakes hands Danke
Gracias Thanks
says
Cuba

HAROLD SILVER.