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CONGO

by

Susan Anderson

Mobutu's day is dying
his jetliner skimming across
the wounded sun
in the evening clouds
rust and copper and blood
bearing him northward
out of the fury of the mines
Black, metallic profit
aching under the belly of flight

Once, Belgium
stamped its seismic foot
Congo earth cracked and
yielded molten blood
Plantation workers lined up
measured hand by hand
Obscene orders given in French
Their hands fell
like butchered oval leaves
in the shadows of the rubber trees
A fallen tribe of protest

The rubber trees extend up
toward Brussels, Paris, NATO
and cringe under a confusion of weapons

The rubber-eaters sip mineral water,
slice bits of copper and
poise them on New York's teeth
Bits of Lumumba's tomb
stirred in the sauce

The Bakongo River
is a muscular thread
seen from Mobutu's mercenary envoy
Dinner is served
on his transcontinental flight

The rebels plan history