

Tigris and Euphrates
(another look at Gulf War I)
by John Campion

Marshes of Tigris and Euphrates
cutters' rib
reed houses
float above mud islands.

A woman prepares
 fire
feeds
 her ovens
bread.

Beating hands do not keep from the flats

men making super paths
 bulldoze
mangroves,
memory of hundreds of thousands;
some
 wipe off the birds.

40 times the double-cross Valdez
desert air smudges
black waters absorb white sun
 dolphin vortices
grebe and cormorant drown.

 Crabs suck dark reservoirs.
Tongues
 from which no words come
reach out;

tide brings in the news
south to quick red shrimp.

For millennia
fish are trapped at the ebb.
No need to gather grasses
or lower nets in this
 salt low sea.

 The war is water.
Tube worms bend the verticals.
Hecatombs of plankton
 waste in the shade.

Coral stars
 await
the black death.

 Barracuda move
 below
one who rises in the sky will not speak.

Cuttlefish
flicker with heat.
Nothing
compared to passions

above.
Slick invasion
in breeding time.

The toilet takes two years to flush.

Urchins tear
platforms
(anchored at seabed)
covered with algae and sponges.
Fish pulse
in dusky light.
Sea snakes wriggle the black.
An archway collapsesó
filterers
choke vomit,
detergents kill.

Toxins seep in crevices
to green turtle eggsó
soldiers remark
the musical ballet of tanks
like females
leave tracks behind.

Her clutch
hatch alone
suffocate on tar balls.

Of great price our Pearló
Virgins stiffen the thought;
effluvia tongues deeper.

Off shore
spring water rises.

Do not bother
to go fill
your bottles.

* **

Like Mussolini
he's draining the swamps.

Now we will not bomb
the dikes
diverting water
from marsh people
suffocating with dust.

Old Growth Music

I

Old growth
music a barometer de-
scribes

a score
not unlike
Stockhausen.

Each
over time

in
habits
a physical
and acoustic niche,
a band
and frequency:

you the morning show
I the noon
she the evening.

Mus[-]k
or urine
marks
the boundaries.

II

Sound of an elephant
heart
shaking air
is silence
to us.)

Wine-dark water
layers
wild diversity.

Before
air filled with frog pipes,
crocodilians grunted

miles wide.

Pollutants
diminish

oceanic sound,
the biota above
and
below.

III

World a tuning fork
voices full of
water-
fall
head

"lift-up-over sounding"
canopies
tree

The Mu-
sic endangered

Religion
thief of thunder
comes.

No one under 25 sings.

The Riflebird has
NOTHING
to say.