

## **The Cigar Taster**

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### **Published version**

WAUDBY, Carolyn (2006). The Cigar Taster. Magma, 35.

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## The Cigar Taster

Life curls through the air like carnival streamers,  
the frills of white skirts on chicas  
shaken before men like the bullfighter's cape,  
then pulled back, cruelly, like curtains.  
Feet mirroring hands on drums, fluttering  
like moths, hips sketching circles  
that screw their way heavenwards.  
How I loved as a young man!  
The Cohiba - spicy as any Cuban chica,  
her guava, papaya, banana teasing the tongue.  
Such freshness. Morning, when I wake, the scent  
of rum lingering, the washing hung out like flags  
of celebration; noon, when brown stubs measure  
the day half gone and yet to come; evening,  
when I leave the factory, two Cohibas for home.  
At night the day grows to maturity – the maracas,  
the bongos, guitarras infect, the chant of the son summons.  
The cigarra performs her best seduction. Oh, how I love!  
The richest leaves are at the top, near the sun's caresses.  
I know the very plantation –the kiss of bonnet chillis,  
the bite of honey. All I want is in the cigarra;  
mi muchacha, mi mujer, mi corazon, mi vida.  
The cowboy dies with his boots on. I shall die  
a Cohiba in my mouth, and two in my pocket for the after.

\* a Cohiba is a type of Cuban cigar.