

DRUMS

Tiered on stowage, we watch footage,
of emaciated enemy, surrendering their armoury,
we guffaw at the paucity, of their resources.
Disembarkation, bellowed orders, equipment checks,
some dissipation, of bravado.
Harbour based high-rankers
leave cognac and bluster to see us off.
Some natives hover, as a bristling drummer
plays us out, as we move to meet
yellow-slate storm clouds gathering over distant hills,
and a foe - tottering on the brink of collapse.
We reek of cordite, sweat and piss,
a rag-tag column in the early sun,
we hear the shouts, we see the throngs
our captors form a barrier as their people come.
So the people beat on trees and sun baked ground
with implements and stones
the thrumming of their anger rising through our bones.
But one stood apart, away from the rest,
her eyes serene, a child at her hip,
and we saw the combat colours on the curve of her breast,
we were marched away - and at her behest
her people raised the tempo
as we **beasts** from the west,
footed it to God-knows where, any place, anywhere,
away from that sound.
Oh her eyes were serene
her child at rest
and we saw the combat colours
on the curve of her breast.
We crowd the rail
as from the quay
kettle drums muffle a bugle's wail
as our ship heads out to a lake-still sea.

Then briefings.
Tiered on stowage
we watch footage
of emaciated enemy
surrendering their armoury.
We guffaw at their paucity
of their resources,

Marxist fever, had all but run its course
we would reinstate - reinforce
the status quo.