**Sweet Like a Crow**

By: Michael Ondaatje

*The Sinhalese are beyond a doubt one of the least musical people in the world.*

*It would be quite impossible to have less sense of pitch, line or rhythm.*

- Paul Bowles

Your voice sounds like a scorpion being pushed

through a glass tube

like someone has just trod on a peacock

like wind howling in a coconut

like a rusty bible, like someone pulling barbed wire

across a stone courtyard, like a pig drowning,

a vattacka being fried

a bone shaking hands

a frog singing at Carnegie Hall.

Like a crow swimming in milk,

like a nose being hit by a mango

like the crowd at the Royal-Thomian match,

a womb full of twins, a pariah dog

with a magpie in its mouth

like the midnight jet from Casablanca

like Air Pakistan curry,

a typewriter on fire, like a hundred

pappadans being crunched, like someone

trying to light matches in a dark room,

the clicking sound of a reef when you put your head into the sea,

a dolphin reciting epic poetry to a sleepy audience,

the sound of a fan when someone throws brinjals at it,

like pineapples being sliced in the Pettah market

like betel juice hitting a butterfly in mid-air

like a whole village running naked onto the street

and tearing their sarongs, like an angry family

pushing a jeep out of the mud, like dirt on the needle,

like 8 sharks being carried on the back of a bicycle

like 3 old ladies locked in the lavatory

like the sound I heard when having an afternoon sleep

and someone walked through my room in ankle bracelets.