

Rohan Preston

THE HONEY-GATHERER



Flapping his father's loincloth, he tramps
up the mountainside, bearing two logwood
poles and an earthen jar, inured to

ivy imprint on shins, calves, thighs,
heedless of the ridges rising on his back
and shoulders: let bruises sign this ardor

of feet and hands. Aerialist in fog, he
dangles at rope's end, a spindly spider
bouncing off sheer cliff-faces as he threads hives

to pry off sheaths of honeycomb, then swoop
them up with his pot. He floats in the ache
of drones who beat their last beats, pulse their last

for their siblings' food — their stings so little
pain for so much sweetness. In their hum
and his prayers, he collects chambers glistening

with the soft light of manna, flowing in song:
this is a passion of mouth and heart. And when
he returns home — laden and with a head-

hunter's calm countenance, laughing with
his whole blistered body — he sings
through scattered teeth an offering of slow

stickiness, of spiraling joy settling in rings.
As he waves his hands across his face to
mime the rhythms of resistance, he sounds like

a tall-taler, this mountain magician,
this half-naked hunter with his sticks and stings
and jar, this riddled seeker blowing so much smoke.

Calabash

A JOURNAL OF CARIBBEAN ARTS AND LETTERS

Volume 3, Number 2 / Fall-Winter 2005

Information about this work:

THE HONEY-GATHERER

By: Rohan Preston

Start Page: 117

URL: <http://www.nyu.edu/calabash/vol3no2/0302117.pdf>

Calabash: A Journal of Caribbean Arts and Letters is an international literary journal dedicated to publishing works encompassing, but not limited to, the Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. The Journal is especially dedicated to presenting the arts and letters of those communities that have long been under-represented within the creative discourse of the region, among them: Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, Maroon societies, and the Asian and Amerindian societies of the region. Calabash has a strong visual arts component.

Calabash is published by New York University. Please contact the publisher for further permissions regarding the use of this work. Publisher information may be obtained at:

<http://www.nyu.edu/calabash/about.html>

Calabash: A Journal of Caribbean Arts and Letters

© 2005 New York University