In the Empire of Chimeras
Also by Martin Anderson

Poetry

The Kneeling Room *
The Ash Circle *
Heard Lanes
Dried Flowers
Swamp Fever
The Stillness of Gardens
Black Confetti
Belonging *
Snow. Selected Poems 1981–2011 *
Interlocutors of Paradise
The Lower Reaches *
Obsequy for Lost Things *
Ice Stylus *

Prose

The Hoplite Journals (complete in one volume) *
The Hoplite Journals I-XXIX *
The Hoplite Journals XXX-LIX *
The Hoplite Journals LX-LXXIX *

An asterisk denotes a Shearsman title.
These poems, a substantial number under different titles, were first published by the University of the Philippines Press in 1999, in the collection *Black Confetti*. All have been revised. Many extensively. In their revised form they articulate and bring into greater clarity and relief that original focus and vision which animated them.
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“In the circle beginning and end are the same.”

—Heraclitus
SAMPLER
De las Islas e Indios

In sea wind their basilicas rot. Their porticos crumble. The courtyards of their lichenined mansions thicken. In our dark faces they stained the pale lineage of their blood. Up long alluvial shores of the coast they entered, through a humid half-light of mosquitoes and dust, scabbards interleaved with prayer. Over their wide piazzas vespers rang: we practiced writing the names they gave us in a language not ours. In the warm seas of our archipelago we stood, looking westward. Upon sweating abutment and plinth, across hot esplanades, a red dusk moved. Slowly. The guayabana ripened, year in year out. On each pensile stem, tilted escritura, the angel of fecundity stood, blowing, blowing. Until, with bayabas, it was restored.
Flight

(IM N.V.M. Gonzalez)

Within this cooling swathe of light, the earth’s unwrapped. A rush of wind on a white wing. Ascending, out of the path of something hard and true, something immeasurably dense and rich, into what? Beneath us, San Fernando glares under a tropical noon, clearly laid out rooftops and walls, a grid of streets transfixed; sharded light lifts up from them. On one side, the sea’s wrinkled integument, brilliant strip of calcined sand; far out umber of coral, water bruised to a deeper tint of itself. On the other, as we tilt, following us, narrating our journey, the high green of the Cordillera lush in drifting cloud, pines gripping in cold wind off each ridge, a silent geography where water pours thousands of feet through air without a sound. You look down, upon a road of moving palms. A tricycle weaving through its cloud of dust. A carinderia. A clump of banban. The land: spread out beneath you. Caught there, in the stubborn terrain of the senses, it had burned day after day, year after year since you left, or did not leave; fashioning a voice in which it might co-exist with that image of itself you had taken with you and were impatient to reclaim.
A House on Remedios Street

Where the gutter flows with a viscid white suspension, through the long hot shadows of the evening. Above steps, the oily penumbra of a lamp is thrown outwards. A brackish emanation floats among the flower pots, the ghostly breath of a dried out mangrove in gardens, lingers, wet upon the arms, the impress of a dying osculation. A streak of fragrance where the hairpins dropped, is gathered now, on the curbside’s quiet, where the cambered dark runs into the trees, small airborne fires, *ignes fatui*, hover. And small boys, following them, leaping to cup that luminous particle in their hands. Across the broken sidewalk, comes the soft rapid flutter of a fan, followed by its shadow, and the long inhaled breath of an ageing matrona at the top of the steps, smoking a cigarette, lost in contemplation.