

The Meeting of the Waters

Rio Negro, Salimões

Thick-waisted dolphins kick-swim
through the trees. By the pavilion,
last evening, one huffed like a man
who'd just fallen asleep. *How long*
was I dreaming? The continent arches
its tectonic spine. Amanhã,
tomorrow. O minhõ, mine.

Warm-blooded rivers
all pulse and breathe. Names float
like petals, like leaves, like the
shape of the raindrops already gone.
Will you still wake beside me,
each tea-colored dawn?
Reek and shush of the jungle

at sunrise, the river's unfricative slap
against the boat. I lean over the
surface—*naõ*, there is nothing.
Strange vowels, like perched
birds, sound from high
in the mouth. A palm leaf
drifts through deciduous

distance. Thunderheads flare above
the canopy's green seethe while
ants reassemble the trees at our feet.
So many nouns press into the mud.
Maõ, mano, I say to you, *Please,*
hold my hand. The tilde's
a ripple, a syllable's wake.

