## **PENTECOST**

Better a jungle in the head than rootless concrete. Better to stand bewildered by the fireflies' crooked street;

winter lamps do not show where the sidewalk is lost, nor can these tongues of snow speak for the Holy Ghost;

the self-increasing silence of words dropped from a roof points along iron railings, direction, if not proof.

But best is this night surf with slow scriptures of sand, that sends, not quite a seraph, but a late cormorant,

whose fading cry propels through phosphorescent shoal what, in my childhood gospels, used to be called the Soul.

PENTECOST from *The Arkansas Testament* by Derek Walcott. Copyright © 1987 by Derek Walcott. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC