

Anna Nickerson

Lemon Pie in Zaïre

Further in, the darkness is absolute.
Fronds and furtive things unfurl while forest
palms and fingered trees press tip and taproot
down through decomposing leaves and drenching mist.
This is where the good things go to die. Light
and air, pools and palaces, sanity
of men and kings—all rot away, while night
brings rumbling forest drums that cry *vanité!*
vanité! tous n'est ce que vanité!
But, creeping further in, she finds a tree
ablaze with fragrant lemon-yellow suns,
and, picking four of the brightest ripest ones,
takes yard eggs, flour, fruit of the *citronnier*
and bakes a *tarte au citron meringuée*.