

*Temperature Normal:
West African
Structural Adjustment*

In his black robe the man
comes stalking from the bush
suddenly noticed he carries
a ghost child on his wrist
falcon hooded alert to be turned
to plunge on death hollow beak
aids profile unasleep.

Around his feet trots gambols
a midget fool mocking order
disorder approaching the main road
out of dense undergrowth of tradition
insane ribald malicious gnomie.

Leafless bare branches of baobabs
writhe to heaven still still
motionless dance grotesque mirth
of agony caricaturing beauty.

An hour and three quarters
by bus from Koudougou to
Ouagadougou. One thousand
local francs. Afro pop on the radio.
Around the churches and mosques
animist ancestors destiffen
bones muscles skins of drum
whirling with closed faces with
burning eyes counterpointing
multi-rhythms of djinni of angels.