

LYNN ATKINSON-BOUTETTE

## ENCANTADO

Next day we fly to Iquitos—a jungle city  
with snakelike rivers and endless rain forests where  
we, transmuted, become part of the warm, rotting  
vegetable flesh, brown sediments of hot darkness.

In the Belen (Bethlehem) market, disembowelled  
turtles, fish as big as pigs, and the skins of boa  
constrictors caress hallucinogenic ayahuasca root for sale.  
We dine on alligator nuggets at the Yellow Rose

of Texas saloon as *motocarros* crowd the tangle of my altered senses  
like big black flying insects. Three hours up river  
I vanish under the piercing eyes of a village shaman.  
I know I must keep my head or be abducted

by *boto*, the pink dolphin—an eerily familiar fetal  
human in a watery beginning, a shape-shifter  
who will take me down to his underwater lair where,  
nudged by his melonlike forehead and long tubular snout,

I will spawn.