

The United Fruit Co.

Pablo Neruda

When the trumpet sounded,
everything was prepared on earth,
and Jehovah gave the world
to Coca-Cola Inc. Anaconda
Ford Motors, and other corporations.
The United Fruit Company
reserved for itself the most juicy
piece, the central coast of my world,
the delicate waste of America

It rebaptized these countries
Banana Republics,
and over the sleeping dead,
over the unquiet heroes
who won greatness,
liberty, and banners,
it established an opera buffa:
it abolished free will,
gave out imperial crowns,
encouraged envy, attracted
the dictatorship of flies.

Trujillo flies, Tachos flies
Carias flies, Martinez flies,
Ubico flies, flies sticky with
submissive blood and marmalade,
drunken flies that buzz over
the tombs of the people
circus flies, wise flies
expert at tyranny

With the bloodthirsty flies
came the Fruit Company,
amassed coffee and fruit
in ships which put to sea like
overloaded trays with the treasures
from our sunken lands.

Meanwhile the Indians fall
into the angry depths of the
harbors and are buried in the
morning mists,
a corpse rolls, a thing without
name, a discarded number,
a bunch of rotten fruit
thrown on the garbage heap.