

GEORGE KALAMARAS

Any Kind of Map

In those days, the French had come late to the Congo.
Anna Akhmatova and I were in a café, drinking Russian tea with
rosehips.

I had been employed to write a contemplative guide to Kyoto.
I tended every voyage with truth and distant sealing trips to the
Antarctic.

We had left Brazzaville in search of more ivory.
The slightest mental anguish between mutual honesties was
enough to disappear.

But the absence of elephantiasis was short if not sensational.
I continue to complete the added villages, the chiefs with ostrich
feather headdresses, the confirmed temple of savannah grass.

I held Anna's haunting, hypnotic eye, and we made love with our
wrist bones.
She was twenty-four then, and I swear I could feel her shudder
when our wrist veins rubbed for a prolonged period.

In those days, I fashioned myself an explorer of any kind of map.
Nothing reassured me like trying to die without directly letting
myself know.