boiling gulf coast blue crabs alive in the backyard boiling pot again. swirling
claws reaching up through an angry spice storm
of foam and peppers.
women with hair tied back
one hand spread
on the hip while the other
hand stirs
talking gossip.
children pushing forward to see the transformation
crabs turning blister broken open red.
milling dogs beaten back with ancestral french curses and laughter.
fresh uncut garlic bread next to horseradish and tabasco
and chucked soft oysters
on a two day old newspaper open
to the pages covering local crimes and misdemeanors
protecting the table from the stains
of careless excess.
hand me down old world accordions and fiddles
in the hearts of the new world
coupling with
hidden from the children
ambiguous bayou deep adult lyrics.
maybe downtown church tomorrow
but tonight they are crushing the grass in paradise
with their whole bodies
dancing young
dancing old
creole
granddaughter of salome
and hometown parish hero of local customs.
at the outskirts of the voodoo world.

the night before gathering.
wf.h.
2023