Rogério went abroad
for his own reasons.

Exiled in New Bedford,
living upstairs in a

North End tenement,
he did his art of Faial:

surging seas, fish eyes,
boats that bob, steepled

houses, phallic flukes.
An artisan, too, he made

his mock-ups as squarely
as did his collages, framing

them strangely in gray
fleck. To keep the wolf

from the door, he sometimes
helped build sloops and
such for Haffenreffer.
When he arrived in New

Bedford, he was, so to speak,
fully formed (as formed as

he could ever be) both
aesthetically and humanly.

He never learned much
English, seeing little need

for it, after all he seemed
to need his own tongue

almost as sparely.
With eyes wide open,

he saw nothing new, so
rooted was he in the shapes,

the compositions dominating
his memorializing inner eye.

His motifs, his themes, offering
the whiff of novel quaintness

in a new country, he never
compromised. Commissioned

to do a cover, he sat a minotaur
at a table, reading a book, a hard-
on. It was cheeky, this one-shot,
never forking over the original.

[Storrs, CT. 5 Oct. 2006]
The Prodigal’s Return

Peripherally (the exact feeling
is elusive, yet not annoying),

I drive the get-us-there car
on my uncle’s needy quest.

After sixty-years abroad,
he is hot for the perfect fig

of his youth. The salted cod,
tough and stringy, displeases

him, besides portions are small,
the wine is fruity, relatives are

old and ornery, just like him.
My kids vomit and his wallet

hides for a night under a car
seat, hindering the search for

the perfect fig. Cold-cocked by
reality, we can't make it happen.

[Nov. 1989]

George Monteiro