

Atmospheric poetry

Jamaica Market

Honey, pepper, leaf-green limes,
 Pagan fruit whose names are rhymes,
 Mangoes, breadfruit, ginger-roots,
Granadillas, bamboo-shoots,
Cho-cho, **ackees**, tangerines,
 Lemons, purple Congo-beans,
 Sugar, **okras**, kola-nuts,
 Citrons, hairy coconuts
 Fish, tobacco, native hats,
 Gold bananas, woven mats,
Plantains, wild-thyme, pallid leeks,
 Pigeons with their scarlet beaks,
 Oranges, and saffron yams,
 Baskets, ruby guava jams,
 Turtles, goat-skins, cinnamon,
 Allspice, conch-shells, golden rum.
 Black skins, babel, and the sun
 That burns all colours into one.

Granadillas: blue /
purple flowers

Cho-cho: green
vegetable pear

Plantains: a savoury
banana

Ackees: a red fruit with black
seeds

Okras: green marrow like
fruit

by Agnes Maxwell-Hall, 1894

1. Read the poem carefully.
2. Shade the words which give you a sense of colour, using the appropriate colour
3. Choose your favourite lines and explain why you like them to your partner.
4. Using your own words, describe to your partner how you imagine the market after reading the poem.
5. Are there any lines which give you an impression of sound or touch? How do they do this?
6. Make a list of words which convey the atmosphere of the market.

On your own, imagine you are at the market while on holiday. Write a postcard home, using the template below, explaining your experience and describing the atmosphere.

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