A PRIVATE LETTER TO BRAZIL

The map shows me where it is you are. I am here, where the words NEW YORK run an inch out to sea, ending where GULF STREAM flows by.

The coastline bristles with place names. The pinch in printing space has launched them offshore with the fish-bone's fine-tooth spread, to clinch their urban identity. Much more noticeable it is in the chain of hopscotching islands that, loosely, moors your continent to mine. (Already plain is its eastward drift, and who could say what would become of it left free!) Again, the needle-pine alignment round SA, while where it is you are (or often go), RIO, spills its subtle phonic bouquet farthest seaward of all. Out there I know the sounding is some deep 2000 feet, and the nationalized current tours so pregnant with resacas. In their flux meet all the subtlety of God's great nature and man's terse grief. See, Hero, at your feet is not that slight tossing dead Leander?

GLORIA ODEN