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My Island

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My Island

I

There are other islands out there,
though so far distant from my perch that
my mind only conjures a fleeting image.
In festive spirit, reaching out together,
my bleached hands open, turned palm up,
I would scream for any old companion
if I could only know for sure that my
singular cry would not echo unheard.

II

I often sit, back to an itchy palm tree and
savoring one of my few remaining cigarettes,
while the vaporous image of a half-naked
woman seductively dances against my pupils.
Neither do I wear any clothing in this heat,
for my only spectator consists of the wildlife,
and their loud chirps and ferocious cries
can only be deciphered as unending applause.

III

The mid-afternoon dance became my workday,
always beginning with the walrus's promenade.
I would wait for the playful Babacoot
and the Green-Cheeked Amazon to arrive
before I ever allowed myself to enter the game.
But the rhythm of those flapping wings and
the unchecked cries of a practiced chorus
always left us caught up in the ritual of dance.

IV

Out of the shadows of my tired daydream
 strolls the figure of my first real lover,
 clutching a stalk of Red Flowering Thyme.
 Carried, as if by the crest of the waves,
 she holds no love for me in that purple gift.
 Imagination becomes what reality insists upon,
 a revelation that serves to make me grin as I
 blink wildly with intent to destroy all falsity.

V

These days it is difficult to see very far,
 and I wonder what lies beyond my horizon.
 Those who come to bid farewell each night
 fill me with a sorrow none in history has known.
 This island I render too small for me now—
 and though I may miss my colorful companions,
 and later long for the solitude I now know—
 I will set sail on the morning of tomorrow.

—Seth Ireland '99