

Souvenir

In the afternoon Bahamas sun
I climb the white wall
Hot and obvious, my shadow tucked
underneath me
I hurry upwards and across the door opening
Looking for dark fingers of palm trees,
A place to wait, invisible and still.

But you are here, watching
Through your single greedy eye,
Hoping I will pause and look over my shoulder,
A creature the size of your finger
Fearful, immobilized, captured in time.

You want to take me home with you,
Back to Michigan, past guards and hot dog
stands,
Flying through air into your living room,
Reinvented on a large flat screen
As an alligator, all scales and grasping toes,
A fragment of an adventure
In a cold Northern night.

Judith Lindenau
3/24/07

In the evening dark

My stone cottage crouches solidly
On the beach, an ungraceful lump,
Formless against the palm forest.

If I were looking in the window
I would observe the poet at the table
Making words appear and fade,
Unspoken, erased, and written again.

And if I were inside looking out,
I would observe the black ocean,
Tearing at sand and rock,
Reforming the shape of the earth.

What I know is, the watcher
Cannot be in one place or the other
To understand the truth of shapes
And the surface of poems.

3/30/07

George's Place

How incongruous to order a pizza
On a tropic island
where bright fish
Nibble the shore
And conch hide in shells,
Curly and baroque and waiting.

There are pineapple in the bushes here,
A coconut drops solidly on the sand,
Miss Barbie's husband grills ribs
In the shed behind her house
And I go to George's restaurant
For pepperoni and double cheese.

How odd it is while I'm waiting,
Wrapped in the scent of baking dough
And tomatoes, to read his poem,
a page tacked to his kitchen wall,
Curling up in the hot, damp air.

How strange to discover,
Among paper plates and plastic spoons
Such passion, dark and fertile as deep swamp
moss,
Tangled as mangrove roots.

He hands me the grey flat box,
Twenty one inches square, one inch deep,
Warm and richly fragrant .
So ordinary
And so magical.

Judith Lindenau
4/4/07

Afternoon in Eleuthera

In the heat of the afternoon
A coconut falls out of the palm tree
In the front yard.
It thuds to the ground
Next to the chair where I am
Dozing in the sun.

The air is still, no breeze
Shook it loose like the one
That pounded the house
During the storm
Two nights ago.
Shocking, that one,
But I could see why
It had to let go.

This large brown head
Just lies in the sand
Staring up at me and grinning
At its own joke.
There is nothing in that tree,
No tropical animal
Throwing things,
No executioner to sever it
With a sharp stroke.

This is what happens in the world
On lazy afternoons
On a tropical island—
Heads roll and empires fall
While we are sleeping.

Judith Lindenau
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