

*Leaving the Island**Isles of Scilly*

Wind. Rushing through the twisting streets of St. Mary's, buffeting the low stone houses closed in on themselves, banging on shutters, blowing our words away until all was gesture, touch, and pantomime. Circumnavigating the island, we watched it beat the headlands like a blacksmith's hammer, heard buoys past the lighthouse ringing madly, like church bells on a Sunday morning. Bodying-forth, we followed ourselves up and down hills without handholds to Pulpit Rock. There, without warning, we stepped into a windbreak and the wind stopped. All was silent and moving, a moving landscape of sea battering rock. Islands, imagined and real—some new and shining, others like old broken coins—stretched like stepping stones far out into the Atlantic, each to be charted by us, the work of two lives laid out like a map. Sight was that clear, but only for a moment. Later, were the black-backed gulls circling the runway at the airport laughing or crying as we prepared for take-off? I'd lost my sunglasses scaling those hills.

Undisturbed, would they look out for me
forever from some high prospect?
How easily our small plane ascended,
the island pulling away, leaving us
feeling regret mixed strangely
with elation, the smoking waves below
moving in slow motion as we returned
to the familiar, to what we would become.

Fragment: White Rose

The sun-drenched beetle with a rainbow on its back,
splayed and luxuriating on the wide white petal—
is that what our life could be?

Us, arms outstretched,
prone and petalled on a pillowed world?

Starved and drowning, I am kneeling now
to gather white petals the wind has scattered.