

A Glimpse of the Future

The tide rises. Swells.

The water in the canal churns and flows, deep until it fans out to the ocean floor, just a few feet deep, miraculously clear, and spotted like a granite slab.

The waves lap at the side of the seawall. An iguana suns itself on the concrete in front of the House with Half a Roof. The canoe rocks on the water's surface as we wait for the rest of the pod.

When we move, it is west. To the ends of the earth, around the ends of the island, formed like a fishhook, angling back and around until we reach a longer straight. Our journey takes us past a mangrove stand, pipe roots sticking splayed out from skinny trunks; they rise tall and then curve gently inward to meet the rest of the tree.

In the middle, brushed up against the edge of the stand in the tangle of roots and leaves, a white chipboard cabinet with laminated faces staring back out to us as we pass. We point it out. I wonder if the kitchen pots from the house it was ripped from are still inside, or if they're strewn about across miles of ocean now by tumultuous halcyon seas. Who knows where the frying pan might be now?

Around the hook, inside shallower water where the oars of the boat plunge into rocky sand, where the movement was made by practically levering the canoe forward, a rust-red sofa sits in a shark nursery, half-submerged, sagging to one side, the right arm slashed open. A small fin emerges from the water and passes by in the distance. We turn around to go back home.

When we pass the bridge and the end of the island, I see the road as if it were emerging from the ocean, a perilous four feet above the water. The mangrove swath looks earnestly small

now, having been battered sideways by the storm's winds. The cabinet door flakes and the wood under the laminate shows through as we leave it behind.

We're told the building that we're staying in had the bottom story flooded as we sit on a deck overlooking the dredged canal. We're told parts of the road washed out, the water rose those short four feet to meet the road. We're told the quarry pit pools overflowed and mixed into the ocean, water moving lazily across the island's surface like a sheet, and then hastily with a current, purpose.

It has been many months since the water swelled and met and mixed. There are things that are torn up, torn down. Things that will always be this way, for they aren't allowed to rebuild: too perilous; projections show in the coming years they will exist underwater and partially torn asunder and with the insides sitting and rotting outside year-round. There does not need to be a storm this time for things to flood, for the roads to wash out, for the water to distastefully mix.

We sit on the deck for a long time and I think about this as the sun falls below the horizon and the mosquitoes come buzzing their choir besides our ears. I think about the sea, mighty, swallowing up land and building, concrete then like reef-rock, cars sunk like ships, a stadium into a swimming pool. About the churn of the water peeling away layers of laminate until all that remains is waterlogged chipboard crumbling like graham-cracker crust on a key lime pie. About this happening to all things, all of us.

'Til we are nothing more than flecks of dust riding atop the crests of waves.