

A Page from a Desert Island Diary

for Victor J. Ramraj, Debanji Ganguly & Ken Ramchand

"In another life
I would have fallen in love with you.

We would have been ship-wrecked,
that's true, washed ashore
clinging to each other
inside a cradle of kelp.

In another life
I would have staggered from the surf
your sodden hair
transfiguring my face,
that's true.

But the desert bit of the island
is not. Yet there we are,
lying on our backs
(the sand is hot)
breathing out the sea,
breathing in the mango air

until at last we arise
and gave our shadows back
their former lives
then step into the fringes
of the jungle to reinvent
the futures

to map and name this island
tongue to tongue,
a first birth place.

'What is that scarlet bird?'
you ask.

In another life
I would have answered your question,
and fallen
in island love
with you.

SYD HARREX