

Fall 1983

Monhegan Island, Maine 1918

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MONHEGAN ISLAND, MAINE 1918

No ships have passed but the wind
hard in from the Atlantic
searches out each cave and crevice
where light refuses to go.
Here, by these rock cliffs
pounded to raw stone
I set my easle up again.
Midday and I have
only sketched in the sky,
its undiluted blue.
Still I am content
to let coarse rock remain,
to let Manhattan slip
like driftwood out of sight.
Only the grass is moved by wind.
On Monhegan at last
my canvas fills,
the ease of my fingers
mixing rock and weathered grass.
For miles the ocean
cleared of barges, pleasure boats
that stray north of Gloucester.
I stare out like
some tourist in the Louvre.
There is no point in being romantic
about this island, the summer
that swallows me
in its drafts and warm air.
I paint, that's all. Wind
has no color, only the bend
of trees, rocks hissing in sun.
In fall I'll return
to New York, my blasted studio
where city buildings

dilate on canvas. But not now,
not with the full noon sun
about to step down
and claim the whole island.