

# NOEL CROOK

## Notes from a Salt Flat Prisoner

*Bonaire*

On this island, love, there is nothing but black  
and white—the sea’s flat back that keeps us,  
bleak shards of coral honed sharp as knives  
by tireless wavelets. And the salt—vast,  
blinding pans for us to rake. It galls  
our wrists and shins like manacles.

Nothing grows here but these crystals. Even  
the dark seaweed swirling in the inlets  
rises on spindly legs as if to swim  
away. Small black lizards whisper  
names of home against the dry rocks  
and we boil them for it. We are sick

of fish. All day the sun’s blanched eye  
seeks us, and not one rock  
big enough to hide under. I am changed  
by this place—like Lot’s wife  
I look back, reconfigure  
the purple shadows in the struts of your

ribs, your tongue in my mouth like pure fire.  
Here there is no holy water or sin.  
Each night we bathe ourselves in brine,  
lie under a black collar of sky, the spume  
of white salt stars, the salt white moon,  
the sting of crystals blooming on our skin.

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