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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