

Two Weeks in a Dristan Land

by Bill Yarrow

when I washed up
alone on the shore
of the blistered isle

I smelled the bleach of burst anemones
the sweet arousal of the Dungeness crabs
the seaweed of sour twigs and feces

I saw debutante goddesses
abashing their swains
for what hadn't come to pass

I felt the uncanny glee of the solitary palm
the dilatory curiosity of the air
the aloofness of the chimerical trees

I heard dolphins and swans,
aligned against integrity, conspire
to co-opt the sunshine and humble the thunder

I tasted hostility in the meanest weed
a cynical longevity in the beach fleas and swamp bees
a flash of happiness in the bold symmetry of the island flag

and resolved in my lately vacant heart
to replace Othello's handkerchief
to repent spurning Cleopatra the queen
and to restore the itching eyes of Gloucester

