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The Sudden Yellow

Dorothy Dalton

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THE ISLANDER

He had not sought the island where he lived; water had risen around his acre: house and tree became a continent, and all his paths went down to was the sea.

He was a natural man, a part of the world. He was caught by the world's water. Time slowed down, lengthening every day to a cycle of seasons divided by noon.

Space spread out: where there was no dove to send out for a token of land, no dove with a leaf returning, each night was huge: among its dispassionate worlds, he watched space burning.

It was long after this, long after he had stopped expecting anything at all that it happened, without any warning, the white fleets coming toward him, a hundred white ships cargoed with morning.

Men stood on the decks. He loved all men so much that he stumbled and sprawled as he ran down to the water's edge, crying his joy out to them, the white, the completely unhoped-for, ships with flags flying.

EDITH STUURMAN

THE SUDDEN YELLOW

Take the lamp off into the darkness wick wet but unkindled; having light's power near should make the night clear.
The little spools of care
unwind and ricochet
upon the bald floor
stirring mice
and other nocturnals
to broad flight.

Unaccustomed eyes
blink before the sudden yellow
and focus myopically.
Then having eyed the flame
with sad success
can close and go sightless
through the throbbing night.

DOROTHY DALTON

WHEN I LOOK AT WOMEN

When I look at women eating
I think they look like fish
Eating other fish, but never-
Theless beautiful. They are
So silent nibbling their bites
And they look at each other
In unlieded silence; so very
Gossip in peaceful
Gesture.

Their hands tenderly pierce
The dead things they are eating,
As if to say: Life is salad,
Fish and roasted pig, hacked
Into crisp, brown pieces. They sit
Disarmingly, so modest in decorum;
Eating at their custard pies; taking.
Taking their time.

AMADOR DAGUIO