

Fallen Angel (2019)

and when I awoke, there was an angel in my bed
 quivering and filthy from atmospheric dust
and he was crying because his wings were stripped
 featherless by the free fall
and on the two plucked stumps on his back
 clung two last downy feathers
and I told him you don't want to go out there
 anytime soon
and we're the only ones left on this island
 so there's no one here to hurt us
and even if we had a boat
 there's no gas to feed it
and even if you could fly again
 the mainlanders would shoot you down
and even if the whole history of the world happened differently
 you'd still be safest here
and so he looked up at the clouds
 through the gap in the corrugated metal
and he said that he would stay
 for a while

and so we swam in the surf on mornings when the sky
 was the same color as the cliffs
and we pulled tatters of plastic out from under the rocks
 to twist into thread for later
and the ocean bared its trillions of tiny teeth
 as it scraped our ankles with silt

and some evenings we watch the sun set
 over the cliffs
and he chews up the jewelweed I gathered
 spitting green into my hand.
and I rub the cooling salve on his stumps
 to soothe the poison ivy
and we exhale heat
 together
and remember

and other evenings storms pass
 over the cliffs
and rain would have drilled holes in the roofs of other houses
 but not our roof because it is strong
and reinforced with heartstrings woven into the tarp
 that we stitched together from the flotsam
and jetsam
 on what's left of the shore