

In Search of the Mainland

The Sirens are now far behind,
the sounds of illusion
are fading in the distance,
and we open our ears
washed in the evening sea,
refreshed in the breeze of silence.
We sit on the dried-up decks
that withstood the weather,
the fallen masts and our dreams,
and across the falling darkness we discern
– or is it another dream –
the airy stretch of land
misty, mystical and undefined
(in the morning we shall know
if our journey was in vain).

We sit and wait for the sun
wakeful and watchful
(we must not fall asleep
lest we dream again
and in our dreams we mistake
a bright shadow for the sun –
the story of our lives).

Yesterday
we were tired and diffident,
deeply engrossed in our search
for our lifelong dream:
the Land where bitterness and unhappiness
are forbidden.
The many islands we passed –
extensions and variations of our dream –
proved unsatisfactory.
It has been a weary voyage.

Now
we stand at the edge of our dream,
grown in experience and knowledge,
ready for the sun.

We become ill at ease,
we are worried, we are tense.
What if this land
proves to be another dream?
There is nothing to indicate the truth
save that we have visited all the known islands
and found nothing of lasting interest.

Behind us
lie countless years of search and knowledge,
ahead flickers an intuition.

And like children staring in the dark
afraid of shadows,
we stare at each other's face –
 the companions' faces,
 lined and scarred by experience,
 their shadowy forms emanating
 the drab colours of pain,
 self-inflicted pain
 for the sake of experience.

Slowly,
 gradually,
 in these faces
there is a cry and a mourn,
and there in front of us
suddenly rise our own images,
and inside each of us
rise all of us
and we become all the islands and all the dreams,
and in our hearts and our minds
we love these islands
the full of bitterness and disappointment –
 were it not for them
 we would never have set out
 in search of the Mainland;
 and the Mainland lies in ourselves.

In each other's moist eyes
we see reflected the islands of unhappiness,
and beyond –
 but is it really beyond
 or in the selfsame islands
 that we see the Mainland rise,
 towering inside us
 as it always did
 as it always did
 as it always did.

For
 the Mainland
 lies in ourselves.