

MANDORLA

NUEVA ESCRITURA DE LAS AMÉRICAS • NEW WRITING FROM THE AMERICAS

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THREE POEMS

ON THE MONOLOGIC ARCHIPELAGO

There's no more island room on
the monologic archipelago:
there are millions in line waiting

and who for decades growing old
cannot pause even for a day
to savor the supreme

windfall: talk talk talk not having
to hear a thing: not a thing beyond
the beatific sound of their own voice

from dawn to dusk and again
till the morning after, freed once
and for all from putting on the face

of I'm listening
you're so right
I'm interested in your story

but I have an appointment.
Therein lies the torture of the monologists
and they cannot converse

for a dialogist will dispute
the agonizing situation while the others,
monologists, will don the landscape

face they've rehearsed since
childhood. They so needed
a place like the Archipelago!

Crowded with more islands than the Aegean,
and more little reefs than the Celebes.
L'enfer c'est bien les autres!

Each on his island! That's how it's best!
Loneliness, as felt by the geometers of Crotoné's
silence, is not what they want. Talk!

Out loud and with feeling! Freed from listening.
It matters not to them whether the sea's
color is turquoise and breathtaking

or whether there's an occasional palm tree
on the islets, or animals. They say the last
dodo lived on the island of one such

monologist: he never saw it
while he reiterated unforgettable
speeches. And Friday asked someone

else for help after Crusoe deserted:
the monologist moved to another
island so as to be left undisturbed.

The monologic republic may well
be found elsewhere. It makes no
difference! Anything but dialogue.

And inasmuch as it conveys
their contempt for reality
the less there is the better.

Happiest are those who abolish it on
ideological grounds and with no explanation.
Determination as opposed to autism.

There are dialogists who experience loss
when, after waiting, their beloved monologists
depart for the Archipelago.

What can I say to them but that soon
they'll find solace in talking that falls
on more or less attentive ears.

There are dialogists who endeavor to save
one monologist after another. They're
the so-called "unconscious" and, rarer

still, "martyrs of monologism."
Martyrdom is a right! It ought to be, granite-
like passage, an article in the constitution.

But there are those who learn and,
in time, manage to rejoice:
from shelves and family albums

they purge the photos of those who now
live on the Archipelago; they even
move away from home or country.

Their aim is to begin all over again
maybe like Sisyphus but this time
in the dialogic world.