

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Rogue Island Mermaid

By Richard Dey

You talk of swimming or, rather, not in Maine?
I tried it once. I knew better, of course,
but had been dared by a beautiful woman
who wanted to go swimming and swimming naked
but not alone. What fun is that?
So we stripped, not without noting the suddenly
salient, and jumped from the starboard rail.

This was off a sandy crescent beach,
deserted and less like Maine than the Caribbean
with its allure of hot-tub salvation, carefree ways.
I was hearing reggae, I suppose,
rhythms of desire fulfilled and dreams come true,
and the palm fronds knocking,
feeling the Trade Wind

when . . . *never*
was I out of the water faster than I went in.

Taking her sweet time, she seemed to enjoy
herself swimming the length of the boat
in that luminous watery light,
swimming evenly, even sumptuously,
her pale flanks shimmering, purple and gold.
On deck, beside the cockpit coaming,
with flukes where feet had been,
she combed her long black hair
and I heard rise from her full, deep-blue lips
the unscaled notes of her legendary song.