Virgil Suárez

Las Ausencias

THE ABSENCES

Take an island, any island, make it this one, so blue in Caribbean water, this crocodile cleansing itself from being down so long. Think, lo que no está, that which isn’t there, this rock, that tree, all of a child’s memory for la distancia of thirty-eight years, and counting. A wrought iron balustrade, the picture of Jesus having dinner with those other twelve angry men, Judas, of course leaning away toward an open window, listens to the caw-cawing of a raven on a fence post, a rat’s heart in its claws. En esta isla de cadáveres, in this island of cadavers, yes, like those black and white American 1950’s movies, a scaly, green creature in the depths of an onyx lagoon. Zombies for the lack of everything. The politic of forgetting.

Those of us without tomorrow. Los que no tenemos mañanas, my mother likes to say. Here we eat, says my wife, with or without you when I go off on trips. Meaning what? I ask from the distances I try to desperately bridge. But always, the dream, an island in the middle of water. Call it an oasis.

A bull’s-eye you have to shut your eyes to hit.