

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.

