

Four Poems · *Chase Twichell*

DREAM OF THE INTERIOR

A dog that has been sleeping on a crypt
rouses and stands up, her yellow hide

sunken over the haunches,
pendant teats crusted and dry.

Green spotted lizards drop noisily
down through the serrated leaves,

rustling among the wooden crosses,
plastic flowers and melted votive stubs,

the heaped sand bordered by shells.
What do I long for or deny such that

I dream up this paradise for myself,
and why is there so much death in it,

so many nameless grave-dunes?
Beyond the tumbled coral wall,

the heavy sea-grapes hang in dust,
the sea folds up its white rags

and shakes them out again,
and the crude oars of the fishermen

dip and rise and fling away
their sapphire droplets.

If I leave this place, could I find my way
home through the streets of sand,

the bones asleep in the heat?
A vine like honeysuckle scribbles
over the wall, one sweet taste
on the pale green tip of each stigma,
the delicately splayed petals spilling
pale orange dust and perfume.
If I put my tongue to a single flower
I'd suspend here forever
in my unknown need,
swaying like the black dog
on his yellow bride, slightly off balance
among the dead, locked in a dream.

USELESS ISLANDS

I'm trying to remember
what happened when love overtook me,
how the old self slipped
from its hard boundaries
like a ripe plum out of its skin.
It's a personal mystery.
It was August, each moment
setting fire to the next,
the woods already
bloodied by the first bright deaths.
I'm trying to remember, but there's
a blacked-out part to the story,