

FROM A LAND CALLED NEAR-IS-FAR

But what if all suffering is in fact for nothing—no particular wisdom after, blooming flower-like, blood in the water? To be stripped of one's armor and left naked, dying, on a field of war—that's what humiliation meant, once. Remember? There's a color I've seen, sometimes, just before some larger mistake happens that will change everything, and forever, soon a life will turn—even now, begins to . . . Mercy's a cliff, I think; a sea adorns it; if I forget the name, if I forget what I called the sea—here, beneath the several whips of the smoke tree's twisted branches—what's it matter? How at bay the light seems. For once, let's be still. Together. It could be hunger, it could be sex, that smell, or fearfulness, or just fear by itself—tenderer hands than ours, soundlessly, as they at last unyoke us.