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Tomb of a New Religion

Only twin sorcerers would defy the sea,
covering the reef of heaven
with loose coral and stone;
on this platform their flying
dragon piled volcanic rods
into palaces and tombs—
the strength of hot
fire and air cannot be
oversold

Their magic words kept building
more islands, more mansions;
the future fell through time
as our fresh water and fruit
filled their bellies
and hands

When they traded dog
meat for Mother Turtle,
it was time to resist,
and on feast day
the liver devoured by the queen
came from her own father's
guts instead of our goddess
as planned

Rewriting legends
or raising up new earth
requires no demons, or dragons,
or arcane writ of magical law;
to avoid the greed of self-appointed kings,
simply navigate the spaces
between false idols

Cut loose from land,
phantom islands contemplate
the sea—
moving meditation,
as if right mind
could clear history,
or at least digest it

Swimming to Shangri-La

An ocean is no place
to tread water;
move forward or drown,
like a shark

At the bottom,
your body becomes bread and wine
for spiral worms, armless,
legless things, and pale crustaceans
whose armored bodies move
on stilts to feed
with a dozen jaws

Yet this is no city of death;
it teems with twisted life,
an upsidedown place where
the weak take apart the strong
with hands like tools
and rasping mouths

Not honest bites,
but pieced off bits and grated froth;
machines eat this way
when they mine mountains
for their copper
and humans for their
souls

On the surface,
each stroke
pumps fire into a new muscle;
simple fuses,
they must soon
overload,

but for now, you swim
toward civilization's heart,
pulling yourself
across this salted desert
hand over hand—

A mountain you climb sideways,
but where falling
means going perpendicular
to the expected plane—
descending an undiscovered stairway
to a light-free land
as alien as another
galaxy, and almost
as far away