

# THE SPOON RIVER Poetry Review

*David Bond*

Monhegan Island

*Welcome to Monhegan Island, Maine.*

*Now please, go home.*

—National Geographic

I.

Half the ten mile trip Seal Rock  
bursts from fog as if your sight  
suddenly swerved to a perfection of clarity—  
mahogany boulders edged in night,  
the symmetry of pine boughs unbearably  
brought to focus before a lap of yellow light,  
spurs of too-blue water forcing each of us  
to throw down his or her impotent palette,  
ridiculous notebook, speechless, accepting  
the gift with a sense of utter joy, utter loss.

II.

Against a wooden pier and slip of anchor stone  
the mailboat's evening passage ends.  
We, tourists, artists, bottom-feeders, flounder  
uphill in a steady rain, along village streets  
narrow, unpaved, unilluminated but for a dim  
Eveready aimed at the cul-de-sac of filthy water  
ahead. We steep like Dadaist tea bags, no longer  
interested in beauty or Turner's visual similes.  
We are cold and wet and have given up all possibilities  
of sainthood. We realize there are no doctors on the island.

### III.

Summer season, in rented cottages, many painters of landscape and a few hopeless poets colonize Monhegan, seeking an *Augenblick* of selflessness within the swell of flung waters, the earth's scarred stratum, the pavonine, almost-arctic light.

And this morning I wake to find myself not at all famous. The room is filled with sun, caravelles of salt air and the cries of sea birds. Later she and I walk long where the rock rose and split from a deep objective page of North Atlantic heaving itself again and again, casting up strands of slick seaweed and the shells of barnacles; we walk, breathing landlocked words so stale, so small.

In the village library, I find a book of poems by my friend, nudged between those of Jewel and John Keats.