

Land (1)

*was there
a moment when I actually chose this?
I don't remember, but there could have been.
—Elizabeth Bishop, "Crusoe in England"*

The island had eyes. The air had ears.¹

And there were people everywhere, an audience you

wouldn't believe. Flora, fauna. Fauna. Fonts. Fun. Flora.
Carnival, but written as "cannibal." Naima tapped and

whistled a take on "Night in Tunisia" ("*Agua,
bayas y la plaga roja*" *en otra idioma*)

The chalk hopscotch boxes are faded now
like the memory of hopscotch played hopped up

on scotch with your eyes scotch-taped to
the back of an enlightened Scotchman's head. Heavenly!²

Like most prisoners, Crusoe claimed to just be
"gay for the stay"³ but love's permeable as

1. The usual corruption of words, like Yule for "you will" and Tom Cruise for "The Cross."

2. The American hopscotch board looks disturbingly like the Cabalistic Tree of Life. You know, the ten Sefirot that one traverses in one's journey to reconcile existence with God. I'll leave the connections between the actual hopscotch rules and the Cabalistic tradition as an exercise for the reader. The word "Heaven" is written across the tenth sefirah, Keter, the loftiest of emanated sefirot.

3. "The last three years I had this creature with me ought rather to be left out of the account, my habitation being quite of another kind than in all the rest of the time."

permanent marker° on paper° and anyway
Friday's invisible° *maker/papa/invaluable*
ink diary tells the (posthumous) story, playing possum

with history. What was weird about him was
his insistence that he was all alone when

of course we were right there with him,
reading. This was as plain as the charcoal° *cherub*

nose on your parchment-colored face, but Crusoe
had his to the grindstone while we were

empty locust shells drifting through courtyard games of
bombardment. Incoming! Outgoing! love love love Hide, seek.

The future was then! Like a creature feature
you can't make out. The windows were foggy

as the panopticon was fuzzy (was he?)—nobody
digs being Kipling's other, it's a bloody mess!⁴

(and yet each year they slog° onto the *slang*
beaches of Scious Ness to plant or lay

their hatchlings° or saplings° and what-have-you, *halfbreeds / savings*
knowing full well, probably, that a total bunch

of them or something won't make it. They
live at the center of the earth as

4. *The Burmese and the Zulu took it square upon the pate*

But the Sudanese were not put down 'til 1898

General Gordon bought it at Khartoum in 1885

But a colonist aint a colonist less he takes his evil live

their father's fathers did on TV before them.
Did I mention the slogging which passes for

travel? The vegetation is so thick in places
it must serve as protection for *something*)⁵ The

archipelago's one berry-stained billy goat's a red
manic panic invention—one of the unspeakables. (is

that the logos in her pocket or a
pack of legos?) (is that ego on your

face or the cogito ergo summer of love?)
As if it was the cart in his

path that made the horse overturn the
apple rather than his desire for the apple!

My eye! Your eye! I am convinced now
more than ever that there is nesting afoot

outside our purview. Notice the footage, though, of
saddleback wrasses feeding on their fibropapilloma tumors, which

an acquaintance passed along to me. I sometimes
get the feeling that the real is what's

wrong with my head,—that's between me, understand.
Crusoe is the local god of UltraWave™ hair

5.	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30
DIS	Boy Meets World Shawn hides pig	Boy Meets World Cory cheats on IQ	Proud Family The house burns down.	Lizzie McGuire G's bar mitzvah.
DSC	Animal Arsenal Animals defend them- selves with claws, teeth.		Animal Arsenal Creatures.	Seemingly harmless

straightener and rhinoplasty but the real Crusoe was
a black sheep⁶ who could only bleat from *ship*

hilly bourn. This was the Crusoe whom Friday
loved so much he shaved him weekly for

dark sweaters. Perhaps Cicely Tyson wore such sweaters.⁶
“The account of the rest is as follows:

3 kill’d ... 2 kill’d ... 2 kill’d ... 2 kill’d
1 kill’d ... 3 kill’d ... 4 kill’d ... 4 escap’d”

“Most viewers didn’t know what to make of
a hero who was dazed by moral complexities.”

you can’t teach this stuff, we’re hopeful, now
that we’ve accepted our role as documentary.

6. **S**he was just there. She wasn’t carrying a tray, she wasn’t a maid.
Just there in cornrows. ⁷Did the episode “Who Do You Kill?” inspire
Gil Scott-Heron’s “Whitey on the Moon”? ⁸Is Kenyon Hopkins short
for Gerard Manley Hopkins? ⁹Art thou George C. Scott? “If you say so.”