

Virgil Suárez



## *Las Ausencias*

THE ABSENCES

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Take an island, any island, make it this one, so blue  
in Caribbean water, this crocodile cleansing itself  
from being down so long. Think, *lo que no está*,

that which isn't there, this rock, that tree, all  
of a child's memory for *la distancia* of thirty-  
eight years, and counting. A wrought iron

balustrade, the picture of Jesus having dinner  
with those other twelve angry men, Judas, of course  
leaning away toward an open window, listens

to the caw-cawing of a raven on a fence post,  
a rat's heart in its claws. *En esta isla de cadáveres*,  
in this island of cadavers, yes, like those black

and white American 1950's movies, a scaly, green  
creature in the depths of an onyx lagoon. Zombies  
for the lack of everything. The politic of forgetting.

Those of us without tomorrow. *Los que no tenemos  
mañanas*, my mother likes to say. Here we eat,  
says my wife, with or without you when I go off

on trips. Meaning what? I ask from the distances  
I try to desperately bridge. But always, the dream,  
an island in the middle of water. Call it an oasis.

A bull's-eye you have to shut your eyes to hit.

