

## A Page from a Desert Island Diary

*for Victor J. Ramraj, Debanji Ganguly & Ken Ramchand*

"In another life  
I would have fallen in love with you.

We would have been ship-wrecked,  
that's true, washed ashore  
clinging to each other  
inside a cradle of kelp.

In another life  
I would have staggered from the surf  
your sodden hair  
transfiguring my face,  
that's true.

But the desert bit of the island  
is not. Yet there we are,  
lying on our backs  
(the sand is hot)  
breathing out the sea,  
breathing in the mango air

until at last we arise  
and gave our shadows back  
their former lives  
then step into the fringes  
of the jungle to reinvent  
the futures

to map and name this island  
tongue to tongue,  
a first birth place.

'What is that scarlet bird?'  
you ask.

In another life  
I would have answered your question,  
and fallen  
in island love  
with you.

SYD HARREX