1983

On the Way to Singapore

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0743-2747.1088

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This kind of fear is not new to me. One night on the island trip, I woke to a breeze of dust and mosquitoes. The moon, liquid and turquois, reflecting on the surface of Lake Baikal, lit the tall grass along the paths the reindeer sleighs cut into the woods. I had heard such paths into the forest when overgrown at the end of spring might lead to an illegal still or the encampment of escaped convicts. I searched for a long while in my bag for a pocket-knife I swore I had packed until I was tired again and slept. Tonight it is easy to imagine how dark the sea gets beneath the ship and how carefully a weight might drift to the soft silt and sediment. I have to use a handkerchief all the time now; my cough has begun. In the evenings, I feel feverish. We have buried two bodies at sea. When you see a corpse sewn in canvas, hurled with a slow somersault into the water you remember just how deep the water grows beneath the ship, you begin to feel afraid, and you get the idea that you too will die and be thrown into the sea.