Images on the Beach

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Under palm roofs,
we looked at the sea.
Crabs parsimoniously dislodged among themselves
among the rocks,
clouds of salt,
wind that stirred the hair
and lashed the palms on the roof.
We drank coconut milk.
The sea smothered our voices
with its growing clamor,
devoured the earth
leaving to the air the reddish, wet roots
of the palms.
We had little to say.
Taste of salt water in the throat
eyes reddened,
thought in some other place,
and a growing drunkenness toward the sand.

The night, basin,
    echo on the bottom,
like the coins you throw to the well
and that take so long in reaching the water,
    echo in the deep.
And in that echo,
    again,
the clamor of the sea,
syllables without feeling,
heat in the bodies.
Naked to the wind
like the boy who leads his horse
    close to the sea.
Blue reflections on the shore
return the sand,
    snow,
cemetery,
    swallow’s wing.

    . . .

You leave the sea,
stretch out on the sand
and your stirred breath
    comes and goes
like the waves.
You listen only to your own heart.

translated by Abby Wolf and Eric Walker