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Samuel Beckett Corresponds With Father Damien On Molokai

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SAMUEL BECKETT CORRESPONDS WITH FATHER DAMIEN ON MOLOKAI.

The exoticism of place and people has nothing on the exotic nature of experience.

He said.

This disease comes wrapped ornately: non-native, inhabiting, like you, your own parcel.

And there, too, you, lifting yourself as a gift from the selfsame box, wrappings drooping aside.

You, correspondingly, as background—all palm, surf, and volcano.

In the foreground you stand holding the present you are before the recipient you are, like

a garment the birthday boy drapes across his chest, speculating on fit.

Yes, a birthday, I realize—that’s what it is—

The alien nakedness of self to self.
The candles redundant in the balmy weather.

The breath peeling itself away from deadened tissue, whereas the lung extinguishes the light with its own rare, numb substance.