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The Man in the Oxford Shirt / At the Bowling Alley

Zach Schomburg

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THE MAN IN THE OXFORD SHIRT / AT THE BOWLING ALLEY

Zach Schomburg

the man in the oxford shirt

the man in the oxford shirt
rolls up his sleeves
and curses the fences
that stand where the grass
meets the dirty beach--
he curses the catholic girls
in their dresses
they are building soft castles
around his hard shoes--
he asks. why are you not in school?
it is the middle of the day, isn't it?
it is the middle of the week?
they laugh quietly
it is summer
they are eighty
and the cigarettes they smoke
become the new kings and queens
standing crooked
white with golden filters
in grains of sand
big enough to be small rocks

behind the fences
palm trees sweat last night's rain
they are not tired
as might be expected
but they sing sad songs
for the cigarettes--
they sing. the man is in my hammock
and he swings
he swings
salty tears drop from heavy leaves
onto the cheeks of the sleeping men--

I wash up on shore
minutes after noon
tangled in wet black leaves--
this is my birth
crawling from the ocean
to the earth
into the arms of old men
who are playing checkers
in the sand--
given time
they we will all be kinged
and they will trade their golf caps
for crowns--
they say. you will be ruled by us
because you washed up near us
and they began to build

a soft castle
around my small pink feet--
my first word is as dirty as the beach
and the old men smoke cigars--

the catholic girls
are still laughing
as the ocean waves
climb over themselves
and dampen the lining
of plaid skirts--
the old men trip over
crustacean game peices
and roll back into the sea
where the waves mumble truths
that only the sea shells can hear--

the man in the oxford shirt
listens to the pelicans instead--

-- zach schomburg

At the bowling alley

At the Galapogos bowling alley
I see my ancestors
tying
the modern loop
on their rented sandals

lost children
molest
the front of a vending machine
while a bellied man
repairs it
from behind

a frail man
bowls
a three hundred game
on the last lane
and nobody notices

and in a dark corner
sasquatch and satan
argue
over the evolution of man.

-- zach schomburg