

New Poetry by Lawrence Bridges: “Time of War and Exile” and “Taking an Island”



THE BROKEN LAND / image by Amalie Flynn

TIME OF WAR AND EXILE

Delicate horse feathers climbing the bier,
Rhesus monkeys playing sincerely with bombs,
Alouette, the weightlifter, seasons the vegans' food
with the rillerah and finds Roger dozing
among bananas.

History is pleased by turnabouts
none can explain nor defend because they're dead.
If only we'd noticed that it was primal
behavior going back eons that was on display –
No war, no truth, no civility – the beards grow over
niceties that fast! Then we make peace to survive.
No wise hand placates the broken land, nor kisses
the clan that feeds it. I watch myself
display courage in emptiness. With emptiness,
every hour is the same, a wait for exile
from the churning heart long separated

from its homeland.

TAKING AN ISLAND

The stations in my head
broadcasting jazz and news since
VJ-Day almost
have witnessed everybody
escaping annihilation
almost,
and I'm loading material
bare-chested on a beach
in the tropics, a sniper
in a nearby palm playing Bach.
I have nothing but the memory
of home and her
tattooed on my arm,
the caressing lagoon
at my ankles
a whiff of plumeria
as I carry my weight,
swift bullet whizzing toward
my head