

RICH PORT, POOR ISLAND

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we finally knew each other in the beginning
as hands in the darkness
giving not taking

we'd met on coqui island
and it took four days of
"con permiso, senior, como se llega"
to discover where we were

we'd seen each other through lenses and
other people's dreams
and it took a night's mist
and only moonlight bathing us
to see one another for the first time

Carmen and La Abuela
foretold our lives sweetly
in whispers to their children
yet it took a bedtime story
to awaken us

we'd come to the island together
both far apart
being as strong and proud and alone as we wanted
so that it took
an astonishing momentum
to stop us in our tracks
El Junque's water had to pummel us into laughter
an armed stranger had to lead us kindly for miles and miles
a simple man had to speak of terror
roosters had to sing all night
and paradise
paradise had to become a staging area for war

we finally knew each other in the beginning
as a single heart pounding
as two minds careening
madly into sanity
as hands in the darkness

and God smiled mightily