

Islands

By Julian Scutts

To Cyprus

I know an isle, to Love the long-lost home,

the sea's white waves, the sun's hot rays caress.

Necessity, that most cruel fate of all,

has banished Love, yet may not quite suppress

the present fragrance of a sacred past.

On Trodos pines still have their sweet incense.

The while it lasts, no honeymoon can end.

Oh do not mark the boot-prints in the sand,

but hope that Love shall one day conquer all.

Even the sea, long shines the patient sun.

What mars when Love, long absent, claims her own?

Discovery

He dances on the sand

White shirt in hand

And waves, and waves.

"The gold" he cries,

"I've found the gold,

And ruby-stones of blood-red dye."

The heedless head-masts

Sink from sight. Salt-waters lap.

Tears trickle down his hollow cheeks,

For now he knows the reason why

white bones bestrew the golden strand,

And vultures squat so patiently

Upon yon head of bald-bare rock.

Desert I-land Discs

My desert I-land is a great place to be.

Would you care to peruse this brochure?

But even with the Bible and Shakespeare,

my eight favourite gramophone records,

and a limitless supply of needles,

not everything is kosher.

If you're feeling lonely, how about
me coming over to you-land,
or if you like, you can visit me-land
On second thoughts, I'd better visit you-land first,
As in the second person you can't tell nominative
from accusative.

In any case, we can always practise the dative,
or conjugate in the first person plural.

We'll see I to I, I'm sure.

Then we can go on trips to him- and her-land,
and even to the continental them-land
(if you can stand the crowds).

But if you come over to me-land,
I'll show you all the tourist sights.

Don't believe those silly stories about swamps,
shark-infested bays, and so on. Lies, I tell you, lies!

Mind you, I can't promise fair weather all the time.

If the wind's in the wrong direction,
you might imagine you're getting the whiff
of an imaginary swamp. Lies, I say!

Can I interest you in a colour brochure?

Visit my sunny I-land--excuse the slip--
visit me-land.

Some adjectives can be so possessive.

Envoi
There's no need to get tense

about the future.

After the conjugation

and--excuse my grammar--

the copulation--is over,

and we are no longer active,

let us, the redundant,

decline in the imperfect,

and dream of a promised land,
beyond the gloaming,
where the sea ends in
the infinitive.
On being Throne out of this Sceptred Aisle--Monarchs and Bad English
William the First was the last king to come uninvited
Though invincible armadas have sometimes been sighted.
Foreign kings were imported in cases of doubt.
Local lads had the habit of getting thrown out.
In the War of the Roses none tipped the scales
Till the battle was joined by young Richmond from Wales.
A house like the Tudors for to bring to and end
On virgin queens you may safely depend.
Then came the Stuarts, who in Scotland had root,
But being too tactless, they were given the boot.
Though of Orange the house was not without fame
Some Irishmen spit when they hear Billy's name.
George the First from Hanover was in English ill-versed,
For affairs of state a state of affairs by no means the worst.
George the Third, however, spoke English quite well,
So Yanks up in arms tolled the Liberty Bell.
Thus Frenchmen and Dutchmen, Germans and Danes
Have oft made their subjects rack their poor brains.
But the history of monarchs whose accents were poor
Holds even today many lessons in store.
At the hustings the parties will promise us aught,
But after elections some memories are short.
"A king is a man, no less and no more,"
said a very wise king as he sat by the shore.
"Let each of you here, thane or serf, be astute.
Don't expect me to do vot I plainly canute."