

## Settler

The island was a word he woke upon.  
Split by birth in two: one side dark  
And carved or caved into peninsulas.

The other, an extinct volcano, blown  
Out, leaving a circle full of air.  
The ground was nothing, but it was flat;

And by lying down things moved far away.  
Hard beneath him, the island was a dot  
He washed against, wishing he were drowned.

Gasping in the foam, coughing up  
Other words, other islands, wreckage  
Noisy and populous once, they crumbled

From his memory, no longer worked as word.  
But this beach, once he got back his breath,  
His way of seeing in the dark, was his

Alone. There were no Fridays in the sand.  
No vapor trails overhead, no smoke-stacks  
Floating through the island silence. Only

The sound of him, map in mouth, exploring  
Back and forth, forging the black rock  
And giving it a name: No, No, No.