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For the First Time

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For The First Time

Cockatoos gnaw the heart from papaya, leaving only yellow streaked skins. On the reef at morning, blue starfish abandoned by the tide. Take these events as signifiers, not for the grief of loss we fear our children will know, forests gone, the sea a carrier of pestilence, but for design, the way men or women lift their eyes after a mistake, seize some inner knot of strength and using both hands tie a stronger one.

It is the moment of clarity that matters: the slow warmth of satisfaction felt when for the first time I saw in humus fertility and not death. Like in the letter I wrote to my friend, trying to explain my leaving, that the ocean between us is not simply abrasive waves, a stripping away. It has more to do with how the gravel reassembles as each wave dies. The continual reorganization. The sharp red as a lory darts from a coconut palm. Children who sketch patterns in the dirt after the midday sun. Daily I walk down to the stream to bathe, sit with the water to my neck. Then fallen leaves appear to move against the flow, and the salt from the sea, upward from the mouth.