

pink.

I tell myself one lie whenever I slip into the water for a swim. It's a matter of my survival. Not sincerely, but I chalk it up that way. I love the sea. Mostly how the surface complements the shades of pastel around the island, and the white roofs. The colors are more vibrant from the water. Any signs of an aging landscape are obscured by distance and the squint in my eyes when the sun's overhead. Same goes for Bermudians. Everyone is more handsome and younger when they tread water, but I've noticed I can't do it well. And it's a horribly sad thing. I wear glasses that aren't so thick but precious enough to my sight, that I take them off while swimming. The pastels dotting the landscape suffer from my shortsightedness while I'm out there, drifting. I look anyway, a kind, presumptive glance. The look you fix on your face after being recognized mid-mice. When a friendly honk or something to say escapes your mind in slow traffic. Any scramble of a sentence would do. It matters on these windy roads, choosing kindness.

I know how the landscape figures, I've seen enough watercolor paintings in gift shops, and haven't always had bad vision. Plenty people hard of seeing love living by the water. I live by a busy road—the island's main road—and a golf course. A green space teeming with incredibly small life and hibiscus: all the colors of swizzle, and sometimes pink. Golfers take no notice of these things. They stand there on the other side of the shrub. The one separating our house from the fourteenth tee. They stand arranged in a half-circle watching each other perform ritual movements. Always a variation of the same motion, punctuated by colorful language distracting from the green around them. I don't live by the sea, but my vision makes it so that I listen for it well. As a writer, I prefer my awfully small ears. Always in the range of three to four seconds before I hear the ball meet the water. Not more than three to four seconds can a golf ball travel before meeting the sea anywhere on this island. And if I haven't heard a faint splash after five, I know the ball is safely on the fairway or salvageable in bushes further along. It never gets to six seconds of silence, there's too many roosters around at noon and tree frogs at dusk. Five seconds of silence is all the golfers can bargain for after making good on their backswing and completing their stick dance. The others bang on their chest. They are nomads, these golfers, notorious for their dislike of the water.

I walk to it, not to find golf balls; in the evenings, when the sunset is the color of the hibiscus, the color of swizzle. My eldest sister told me the best sunsets were predictable, that they'd leave hints in the day's cloud cover. Thick and porous sheets, slices of swiss cheese overlaid on a canvas I thought was universal until I went to places with buildings too tall for our kind of white roofs. Wispy clouds meant unremarkable sunsets, hardly a science. She was right no fewer times than I walked to the pink ferry stop to find an even pinker sunset making acquaintance with the birds; the beaches; the boats; the buoys; and black skin. I enjoy that synchronicity, when the colors above conduct hues on the things below.

There's a local celebrity. He drives a pink taxi. He wears pink socks pulled up to his knees, but pretend his knees are pink too for the consistency of this image. Let your eyes gaze up from the pennies shining in his loafers. He has pink shorts. Eight-inch inseam. Cool senior raised in, he'd tell you, more sensible times. Odds are, he wears something conspicuous and gold on his person and speaks with the warmest Bermudian accent while saying "Evening." He sports a pink shirt and right above it a crystal smile. There it is, the piece of gold I was telling you about. Makes his crystal smile pierce. I wonder how he feels on hibiscus nights. Must be like God.

Sunsets aside, I still haven't told you my lie. But we're at the water now. I'm about to jump in and mash up the calmness of the surface. Beneath I know there are secrets I can't bear to swim with. I scream 'hallelujah' in the name of pink Jesus; I tell myself the lie. My toes are flexed and my small ears are sharp. I have a serious buoyancy issue flaring up. I sink as my ears fill. I fearfully listen out for the murmurs I think fish make. I forget that they don't care about the color pink and bad vision and my lying their existence away.