

The gray wastes of water surround
My puny little sheal. Sometimes storms roll
Tremendous billows far up on the gray sand beach, and the morning
After, odd tusked monsters lie stinking in the sun.
They are inedible. For food there is only
Breadfruit, and berries garnered in the jungle's inner reaches,
Wrested from scorpion and poisonous snake. Fresh water is a problem.
After a rain you may find some nestling in the hollow trunk of a tree, or in hollow
stones.

One's only form of distraction is really
To climb to the top of the one tall cliff to scan the distances.
Not for a ship, of course--this island is far from all the trade routes--
But in hopes of an unusual sight, such as a school of dolphins at play,
A whale spouting, or a cormorant bearing down on its prey.
So high this cliff is that the pebble beach far below seems made of gravel.
Halfway down, the crows and choughs look like bees.
Near by are the nests of the vultures. They cluck sympathetically in my direction,
Which will not prevent them from rending me limb from limb once I have kicked the bucket.
Further down, and way over to one side, are eagles;
Always fussing, fouling their big nests, they always seem to manage to turn their backs
to you.
The glass is low; no doubt we are in for a storm.

Sure enough: in the pale gray and orange distances to the left, a
Waterspout is becoming distinctly visible. Beautiful, but terrifying;
Delicate, transparent, like a watercolor by that 19th-century Englishman whose name
I forget
(I am beginning to forget everything on this island. If only I had been allowed to
bring my ten favorite books with me--
But a weathered child's alphabet is my only reading material. Luckily,
Some of the birds and animals on the island are pictured in it--the albatross, for
instance--that's a name I never would have remembered.)

It looks as though the storm-fiend were planning to kick up quite a ruckus
For this evening. I had better be getting back to the tent
To make sure everything is shipshape, weight down the canvas with extra stones,
Bank the fire, and prepare myself a little hard-tack and tea
For the evening's repast. Still, it is rather beautiful up here,
Watching the oncoming storm. Now the big cloud that was in front of the waterspout
Seems to be lurching forward, so that the waterspout, behind it, looks more like a
three-dimensional photograph.
Above me, the sky is a luminous silver-gray. Yet rain, like silver porcupine quills,
has begun to be thrown down.

~~Most of the lightning is still contained in the big black cloud however.~~

All the lightning is still contained in the big black cloud however. Now thunder
claps belch forth from it,
Causing the startled vultures to fly forth from their nests.
I really had better be getting back down, I suppose.