

ISLAND

My island is a floating monolith on the surface of the deep azure Pacific Ocean. I saw it in a dream. My island and I are yet to be discovered, but one day we shall be, and I can only hope I have lived out my days and slipped quietly to my final resting place.

Each day I see the golden yellow sun rising in the east. There is no land mass, no trees, no hills, no barriers impeding my vision of this warm welcoming globe whose rays reach high and wide and are radiant and uniform. And at the end of each day, I see that same happy fireball set in the west – a prelude to a strange cooling transparency of crystalising lights that rain down and metaphorically bathe me.

My island, although floating, seldom moves position; and because it is situated exactly on the equator, the seasons can only be marked by the stars arranged in their constellations – the greatest of all timepieces.

On this island despite having no materialistic inputs or processed food, I seem to be able to enjoy a bounty of plenty – if I imagine fruit, then fruit appears. If I require nuts or edible flora, so these also appear. I merely order what I require and no more. And to quench my thirst, a flask of clean water can be reached for from an ocean that may in itself deliver more delights, of fish, should I wish this. But I ask nothing more of the beloved ocean.

You may ask what do I actually do on this island?

I look out and can occasionally see a distant ship. As the ship disappears, so my thoughts are to those ancient cultures who considered our beautiful blue planet as being flat! My imbedded knowledge tells me everything I need to know – the planet is round, not necessarily absolutely round, but round for the purposes of our discussion. And there is another clue, the Moon. I have come to realise that the Moon has no atmosphere – we can see craters, valleys, and mountains very clearly. Its motion travelling through the sky is so tracked that I can now predict when the different phases will appear and understand that it is our own planet's reflection that is lighting the Moon's surface. We are the Moon's torch.

My island is not large. It measures just thirty metres in length and fifteen metres in width – size enough for my existence. Occasionally, when a storm builds up around my island, the waves of the Pacific Ocean, beach and retreat, but my island remains stable and calm; the storm always pulls away and is gone quickly.

Birds come and say hello – gulls of cream and white; rainbow parakeets, and curlews, stop on by during their long journey north and south every six months. They tell me of a hideous world beyond the sea, of wars, of conflict, of selfishness. They ask if I have any messages for the world. I never do.

Artwork:

Island by Andy Burnett. 2023. Acrylic on canvas, Private Collection. Image used with permission.