Nancy Anne Miller

Boiling Hot

She rubs the silver pot, with
Gorham’s polish as if her genie
were inside, would waft out from
the steam island tea makes

in such a humid climate. Prepares
triangle sandwiches, lops off
dark crusts that heap on the kitchen
counter as if caterpillars crawled out

from frilly lettuce leaves, like sea’s
wavy rim, the silk cap sleeves on
smocked dresses made for the misses.
Arranges a square like the cross

intersection of the Amen Corner in Paget,
a treacherous passage through.
Dons white gloves used for church
and to serve among the fair English.

Watches their skin turn earth brown,
the harsh light claiming a geography
of persons the empire sent across
the world. The British sunrise on

every commoner’s door back in
London, an unblinking watchful eye,
a fan spread wide open to
cool down boiling hot countries.
Buoy

If you are going to leave your island, better do it on a ship, where you see the water between the dock and your liner extend into the crease of waves, open like an accordion. Feel your heart roll back, forth, a buoy tethered to the wharf. If you must leave your country, better a seaborne way, the tilt of swells rocks you inconsolable, like in a nanny’s crib. Better than by plane where through a tiny window like your diving mask of youth, the hook isle drops away, the sinker you watched disappear into harbour waters when you fished off Paget Ferry. Better a boat that stole many an ancestor into the blue, so when you pour the sludge of Earl Grey from a silver teapot like muddy water from an elephant trunk, it holds all memories that slosh inside, still.

Antique Star Map

Round as a crystal ball, one might turn to find a path, hold in one’s hand, cup a drop in the ocean. This one has a star in the middle, like a Bermuda Sand Dollar, I would find on Coral Beach, the tides washed over, spent.

A pin cushion where precise points prick the dark. A child’s circle of marbles, large planets knock out smaller ones: taws
hit peewees. The nineteenth century one is full of flying figures, a Sistine Chapel for ship captains, where one looks up to feel the muscle of myths ripple the heavens. Capricorn’s bow and arrow, a shipmate’s sextant used to negotiate the skies, to find a seaworthy mark.

Unsmiling

Swimmers bob the Jersey Shore, clutch onto bathing rings, look like workers coming up out of manholes.

A friend rides a surfboard as if on a Chevy’s fender, sharp as a shark’s fin, disappears into the wave’s tunnel, mimics concrete ones that swirl into New York. The sound of traffic in the cement circular byways resonates like inside a conch

I picked up on South Shore full of the ocean’s tremours. There the tide came in, out. A glassy toenail painted over, over in the perfection of leisure. Here, the Statue of Liberty rises, a beached mermaid, the turquoise water has turned to armour. Unsmiling, defiant, with the pathos of a Giotto angel her spiked crown of thorns bleeds the dark. Choice is sacrificial.
Piggly Wiggly Camera  

_Fuji Instant Max 8_

Like it is a hog for all the views
here on my semitropical isle.

The belly button lens,
everything seen tribal,

connects to the umbilical cord,
squats with the strap curling

like a piglet’s tail. I take pictures
through its greedy eye. Think

of the island food store Piggly Wiggly
nourishing Bermudians. Like this Polaroid

feeds me the crumbs of moments.  
_Piggly Wiggly all the way home._