

# The Catch

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## An Island Romance

Baron Wormser

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## An Island Romance

### Cover Page Footnote

The Editors would like to thank Baron Wormser for permission to reprint "An Island Romance," from his 2015 collection Unidentified Sighing Objects.

An Island Romance | *Baron Wormser*

Imagine everything being in place.  
I don't mean only the pins in the drawers  
Though I mean that too but I mean  
Your feelings – not squashed or pruned –  
But right in place and everything around  
You in place, too. That's what  
An island is, that kind of chance.

I know you can say that everything *is*  
In place already, that trees can't dance  
And birds shed feathers not leaves  
And that's the rightness of place that counts –  
And it is – but love gets mixed in here,  
The love between men and women,  
Husband and wife, that we say  
We understand the way we understand  
Anything that we do over and over  
Till it becomes a kind of weather  
But I'm talking about a man and woman  
Living together more than forty years  
On an island and no one else there.  
I'm talking about a real man –  
Black hair, medium height, a trace  
Of a limp on his left side – and a real  
Woman – blonde hair, high voice, small hands –  
Who sometime in the late 40's – how about  
'47? – came to Sheep Island which no  
Longer had any sheep and which had gone  
Back to spruce and built a house of cement  
He rowed over bag by bag from the big island  
And of those spruce he cut and fit into cement  
Until it looked like a house in a fairy tale –  
Each window casing made by hand,  
Each pane set in the sash just so,  
Each window placed for the fullest light.

He fished enough and she knitted sweaters  
And they lived and people wondered but  
They weren't bothering anyone. They had as  
Much claim to live on a place that no one  
Wanted to live on as anyone. When you saw  
The two of them together in Cundy's store  
As often as not they were holding hands.  
They were neat looking – combed and clean –  
But you felt a little uneasy because  
You felt how deep love could go.  
That it could pull you off into a world  
Where you stopped caring about what  
Others thought, that the merest touch  
Of another hand could make your blood simmer  
And softly growl with feeling that had to go off  
By itself it was that strong

They never invited  
Another soul out there ever. They got older  
And they used the boat with the engine  
Instead of rowing over but they still held  
Hands and lived in that house we  
Could picture because we had seen it  
In children's story books. That's why  
The blather about years and bags  
Of cement is just blather – the sorry lint  
Of facts, the *believe* in make-believe.  
These two people had the sea for ears  
And the sky for eyes and when they  
Came together as man and woman  
The pity of fathoms, the cold ocean notes  
That sang outside their windows seemed to waver.

I know about age and death, as did they,  
But think of the morning when they sat  
By the cook stove they'd hauled out there,  
When he came back from the out of doors and she  
Put down her handiwork and they sat there  
With each other, drinking their tea and  
Their mouths making little in-drawing sounds  
And their putting their cups down  
And how the fullness of being alive  
Was the rich heat of their imagining.