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ANY PLACE I HANG MY HELMET

There is a place where the summer is long and the shore is longer, where a soft breeze blows in off the equator. There are no serpents or falling trees or broken cradles. There are no dreams that require interpretation. It is a place, at last, where there are chairs that will support the body for the easy hours ahead. Thoughts come together there, link. This is not the place where I live.

Where I live the summer is short and the shoreline is shorter, much of it built out of bricks and cement blocks of varied shapes and sizes. Most of the cement blocks have a grid of rebar poking out and the rebar can look like a knot of snakes that is about to strike. There are real snakes underfoot, too. Non-poisonous ones, but still. And there appears to be no place to stop, hang my helmet, sit—God, I want to sit—and craft sentences that may or may not reach readers with their messages. I am searching for that place too, stalking and staking, like a child hunting for colored eggs on the third day after the holy rise.

Then, between two trees that grow surrounded by the concrete bed, I see it. A cut of cement that might have been the corner of a foundation or a wall. The corner is flipped on its side, so that it creates a chair, where one side might support my back while the other might serve as a seat. It is perched above the real and imaginary snakes, above the horror. This corner is also wide enough—at least four feet in length—so I can put my Thermos filled with decaffeinated coffee on one side and set my backpack on the other. There are even two cement pieces situated behind this bench that can sandwich the tire of my Cannondale, serve as a makeshift parking spot.

To actively search for anything is to find oneself disappointed at times with the results, like going out and looking for a perfect shirt on the day of a big event always turns up inferior and over-priced products. A narrative where one finds exactly what one is looking for (or close to it) is almost foreign to the human experience. To experience this sequential flow is to feel the world as a kind and generous host providing everything one would want. In