

56708 solaris

The sea is an inverted sky, a troubled mirror reflecting the serene blue dome that separates it from the void. A firmament framed in storm-colored stone, a snake cordillera, walls of blank obstinance. The swift blasts of the eight winds pass, their poetry in names like *gregal*, *llevant*, *xaloc*, *migjorn*, *llebeig*, *ponent*, *mestral*, and *tramuntana*; the voices of massive displacements of cold air their song.

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The western wind, Tramuntana takes its name from these mountains which gape apart near the sea, at the bed of a nearly dry river, a pebbly terrain of reflecting pools and windtorn greenery. It is nature's proscenium, and in evoking a sense of drama, suggests to us, perhaps, that our senses of awe and reverence come from some ab-eternal connection with the sea, especially where it meets mountains and sky.

How these abstractions, formed in cold stone, lashing waves, and teeming creatures, provoke wonder and mortal tension is embodied, I suppose, in our particular human perspective. We are small and vulnerable, but curious. I am reminded of Lem's *Solaris*; its ocean fascinates the earthling visitors with its creative and subtle forms that they can only feebly describe. Endless volumes are written in futility, but understanding never comes. I can only guess that the wise man Lull, native to this isle of Calm, must have had something like this feeling, too. We see these lively but lifeless things as timeless, but we also know that seabeds can, in a long stretch of time, become mountaintops. The eternal, too, is passing.

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Among these rocks and trees is the scent of rosemary and laurel. Other trees sag with the weight of bitter oranges. A church rises from the stones, crowned with a naked bell, a rusting gear and a chain to work it. From the hilltop, I hear the distant clanking of an invisible herd of sheep lost somewhere far away among the oaks and fountainous shocks of mountain grass.

At dawn, the clouds flash an angry pink, like eosine, until their inflamed passions are shamed by a hot rising sun, withering away to the frailest wisps of rose and mauve, in turn finally sapped to depletion by the sea's breath. For the rest of the day, the sun rules.

On another day, angry but playful demons cavort with fire, the most brutal and voracious of the elements,

and fill the air with their chthonic drumming. Rockets shriek and deafen, as the shock troops in the ancient battle of good and evil advance. The parade, a vibrant dirge, a pagan celebration with Catholic trimmings, a river of bodies fills a street that was once a river, pressing on at the pace of flowing lava, and perfumed with the reek of sulphur and gunpowder. Evil is ritually defeated by good in the end, and we carry on, as we always have.

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