

# New Poetry by Lawrence Bridges: “Time of War and Exile” and “Taking an Island”



THE BROKEN LAND / image by Amalie Flynn

## TIME OF WAR AND EXILE

Delicate horse feathers climbing the bier,  
Rhesus monkeys playing sincerely with bombs,  
Alouette, the weightlifter, seasons the vegans' food  
with the rillerah and finds Roger dozing  
among bananas.

History is pleased by turnabouts  
none can explain nor defend because they're dead.  
If only we'd noticed that it was primal  
behavior going back eons that was on display –  
No war, no truth, no civility – the beards grow over  
niceties that fast! Then we make peace to survive.  
No wise hand placates the broken land, nor kisses  
the clan that feeds it. I watch myself  
display courage in emptiness. With emptiness,  
every hour is the same, a wait for exile  
from the churning heart long separated  
from its homeland.

## TAKING AN ISLAND

The stations in my head  
broadcasting jazz and news since  
VJ-Day almost  
have witnessed everybody  
escaping annihilation  
almost,  
and I'm loading material  
bare-chested on a beach  
in the tropics, a sniper  
in a nearby palm playing Bach.

I have nothing but the memory  
of home and her  
tattooed on my arm,  
the caressing lagoon  
at my ankles  
a whiff of plumeria  
as I carry my weight,  
swift bullet whizzing toward  
my head