

## Rachel Baum

### St. Martin honeymoon

The goats were hungry, you could tell  
from their sharp hips and pinched spines.  
the tallest ones nibbled scraps of fabric  
fluttering from a makeshift rope clothesline.

the hired car smelled of powder and orange peel;  
its tires massaged the scalloped back of a rocky hill.  
from the window, she saw cardboard huts and lean-tos,  
children thin as goats playing with stones.

there are two sides to every island.  
on their pretty beach, planted with bright umbrellas,  
polite young men in Bermuda shorts scurried,  
towels in hand, quick as sand fleas.

her chaise lounge faced the sea away from him.  
behind her, their cottage with its peacock chairs,  
fake palm blades of the ceiling fan circling above the bed;  
most evenings, she counted their slow rotations.

she tried, but her hand with its glittering ring  
could not hold on, her solitude like  
a glass of rum punch shattered by  
his moving mouth, his constant presence.

relaying details from work, baseball games, picnics,  
childhood memories, flares of relentless words  
that sunburned the back of her knees,  
washed her throat with sand and stung her eardrums.

leaving for the airport, she saw through glass  
one goat had climbed onto a corrugated roof,  
balancing there, it looked up at the sky  
as if the sun's harsh fire was sustenance.

**Rachel R. Baum** is a former librarian, professional dog trainer, licensed private pilot, and kayak angler. Her poems have appeared in *The Raven's Perch*, *Crosswinds Poetry Journal*, *Poetica Review*, *Jewish Literary Journal*, and others. She is the author of the blog *BARK! Confessions of a Dog Trainer* and the editor of *Funeral and Memorial Service Readings Poems and Tributes* (McFarland, 1999).