



island

a slower shower

alec finlay

*for Linda*

I want the water,  
I want the air.

Kate Bush

Not one thing as another  
but the world as he finds it

Which came first  
the paths or the trees?

On either side of the gate  
there are different ways to wait

That flower she thought was crosswort  
now she thinks is lady's bedstraw

The more trees the less flowers  
the more flowers the less trees

We shouldn't complain  
but we do

No two branches  
grow the same way

Life is different  
above and below the tree line

I don't need you to agree with me  
I do need us to agree

Look in the water  
see the sky

Tug at a fankle  
and you get a knot

The taste of wetness on the brambles  
is pure, then they rot

Can the rain  
not rain?





In his dream  
the keys grow roots

The ducks sleep with their heads  
turned around

Clumps of moss  
islands in a sea of leaves

The lichen's grown  
into the wind's old habits

The leaf falls into itself  
in the pool

Where the river goes  
there grows the primrose

A slower shower  
passes over

Everywhere you go  
your beard grows

Cold flows  
clear as a colour

Singing all the way home  
without knowing the words

Lie flat on your back  
let gravity take a rest

The way that she says moon means more  
to me than the moon itself

We all have  
an island name

Still me it seems  
awake in the quiet of another room

Alec Finlay (born Inverness, 1966) is a poet, artist and publisher (morning star, pocketbooks). He lives and works in Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne.  
[www.renga-platform.co.uk](http://www.renga-platform.co.uk); [www.alecfinlay.com](http://www.alecfinlay.com)

Alexander & Susan Maris are artists, living and working in Scotland.

*island* is a biannual literary magazine providing a distinctive, evolving space for writing and artwork inspired by nature and landscape.

It is edited and designed by Julie Johnstone,  
and printed and published by  
Essence Press, 8 Craiglea Drive Edinburgh EH10 5PA UK

Back issues available:

- 7 : walking
- 8 : turning over a new leaf
- 9 : open spaces, wild places
- 10 : song of stone
- 11 : migrating skies
- 12 : all wind and sunshine
- 13 : two days on Luing
- 14 : sight-lines

Visit the Essence Press website for subscription and submission information, and for news of other publications.

[www.essencepress.co.uk](http://www.essencepress.co.uk) / [jaj@essencepress.co.uk](mailto:jaj@essencepress.co.uk)

My thanks to Alexander & Susan Maris for the use of their image in this issue. © 2007 Maris

Gratefully acknowledging the support of the Tom Wright Memorial Fund.

Issue 15, 2007  
ISSN 1475-9322

Note: Issues 1-6 were edited by previous editor Robert Ford in a different format.  
Issues 7-15 are in the new and current format.

