JANE CRAVEN

Birds of the West Indies

There is a sameness to the origin of islands.
A rock emerges from the sea, its volcanic pockets accreting debris—
fish scales and skeletal shards,
fingernail of turtle shell,
waterlogged cypress

from the haggard mainland. Then comes the extravagant seed,
palming the proto-earth. And somehow,

    gravity-defiant greenness erupts, sunbound.

Next, insects—Drosophila and their maggots, sodden butterflies
dropping from the wind.

Outside the screen door, parrots quarrel in the trees and iguanas
warm themselves on stone slabs in the cemetery.

I run a fingertip along your hip bone. Wing of ilium. Overhead,
fan blades stir the heated air. We kick the sheets away.