



## Gulf and Other Poems

*Derek Walcott*

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As his title suggests, Derek Walcott's new poems--while making beautiful use of Caribbean imagery--are concerned with themes of isolation and the achievement of identity through loneliness. When it was published in England in 1969, *The Gulf* was awarded the Cholmondeley prize for poetry. As the London *Times* wrote, "His new collection is as noble and stern and grand as Milton...Walcott writes with a tropical glory of images; handles his huge pyrotechnic vocabulary with iron-discipline , verve and nerve...His glittering intelligence and luxurious command of sensation fuse in a mastery of images which burst in the brain like balls of phosphorescent fire."

The subject of the title poem is the alienation and isolation of an America

*where filling-station signs  
proclaim the Gulf, an air, heavy  
with gas  
sickens the state, from Newark  
to New Orleans.*

The central figure in the Caribbean poems is a Robinson Crusoe-like castaway, who "learns again the self-creating peace of islands."

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