

## Extremities

I write this down not out of fear  
or desperation—just to let you know  
the truth that you already knew of this  
blank desperate extremity of land,  
the point at which the uttermost  
of land shrinks from a further venture, rests content  
against the sea, to watch a tiny boat  
wane vanishingly small against the place  
where sea and sky blur into nothingness.

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Men travelling the reaches of the earth  
must trek out here to prove some unproved point  
about their land and mastery—but all the same,  
at length they come to rest. Some marker says  
that here's the end—the northernmost  
or southernmost, or what you will,  
be it of island or of continent  
or simply where the road runs out  
its duty done, though purpose unfulfilled—  
and there is nothing more to say  
but only sit and gaze and think,  
from here the world goes on to realms unknown  
which we cannot explore. A kind of death  
inhabits uninhabited ecologies  
beyond this place. For here be dragons.

I think there's not much point  
to make a milestone of this furthest edge.  
But some men might be bold  
and labour through the unrewarded days  
to put a lighthouse here, of shining eye  
scanning the seas through foggy breath of night,  
that those who venture forth in coracles  
may yet return some day to speak of wonders  
to unbelieving multitudes. The truth's a story  
shifting each time it's told, and who are we  
to stand so proud at these extremities  
hoisting a flag? Only for a moment  
we stand on the last rock, looking out beyond,  
shivering and afraid, until some bolder soul  
builds up a further shore against the sea.

*Rory Hudson*