

# Grace Nichols's "Island Man"

## Context

"Island Man" was written by the poet Grace Nichols and first published in her 1984 collection *The Fat Black Woman's Poems*. Nichols was born in Guyana but moved to England in 1977. Like Nichols, the man in the poem is an immigrant from the Caribbean. Each night, he dreams of his home in the West Indies, only to "come[] back" each morning to the harsh reality of his London surroundings. The poem expresses the homesickness immigrants can feel in a new country, while also suggesting that many immigrants keep their home alive within themselves and thus never truly leave it behind.

"Island Man" is written in free verse with no consistent rhyme scheme or metrical pattern. The poem does have a cyclical nature with its content, so consider the significance of this.

Read and highlight the poem below	Use this column to write annotations and notes
<p>Morning</p> <p>And Island man wakes up</p> <p>To the sound of blue surf</p> <p>In his head</p> <p>The steady breaking and wombing</p> <p>Wild seabirds</p> <p>And fisherman pulling out to sea</p> <p>The sun surfacing defiantly</p> <p>From the east</p> <p>Of his small emerald island</p> <p>He always comes back groggily groggily</p>	

Comes back to sands  
Of a grey metallic soar  
To surge of wheels  
To dull North Circular roar

Muffling muffling  
His crumpled pillow waves  
Island man heaves himself

Another London day