

A black and white photograph of a rocky coastline. The foreground is dominated by large, dark rocks and dense, low-lying vegetation. A large, fallen log lies horizontally across the middle ground. In the background, the ocean is visible under a bright, overcast sky. The overall scene is rugged and natural.

**ERNEST GIBSON**  
**'ISLAND RECORDS'**



# ERNEST GIBSON

## 'Island Records'

When You Get There • Beachcaves (Theme) • Everywhere You Roam • When I Translate • In A Daylight Loop • Ocean Section  
Groupwork • Moon Paean • Take Me To The Traps • When We Switch • In Spring (Insects) • All of Us Together • 'Loosa Lake

### Songs of the Island

Maybe you're like me, and the intoxicating blossoms of your dreams don't leave as many loose petals floating in the morning shallows as they used to do. Praise be the ones that come back—rare blooms to be sure, and of course I've had a few in my own time. There's one: a sister, wading through gray surf... hull of a wrecked wooden galleon, shot through with holes... pale umbrellas, stranded on a blank atoll, underneath a silver nowhere sky. Something close to being told in all the salt, and in the sea, and in the dying white reef of a certain porcelain light...

Well, we're a lot of hapless travelers, and most of us forget to draw ourselves a proper map, to keep those fleeting moments when the way is finally shown. Chances are you're trying to retrace your steps back to some half-sunk, halcyon landmass of your own, kicking up foam as the tides roll in to drown those empyreal shores. Yes: rare are the ones who make the maps, and rarer still the ones who render those hypnotic arabesques-- spreading out the unknown lands for all us clumsy wanderers, like the dense, intricate pile of so many Tabriz weavings.

Once in a blue moon. And wouldn't you know that's just what we have here, and it's just what's taken shape between the warp and weft with Ernest busy at the loom, and I'd venture that we might ought to stroll out to the edge of the sand, assay the incandescent leavings as they emanate, before this uncommon radiating hour washes out.

These are Island Records, but it isn't the *Dypso Calypso*, and no, ma'am, it isn't *Slave To The Rhythm*, either. This is subtle menace music for companions in the gathering dusk. These are sounds of the nearly dissipated, of the

never quite appeared. Of the never quite awake, and for the just about to sleep, and for those who never will.

This is the low rustle of naturally occurring ornamental grasses, bending on a darkened dune awash in scrap, beneath some vaguely aromatic winds. This is the sound of muscle on fiberglass, of fiberglass on lava, of sightless descending in a slow motion, miles-long vertical drop. The sound of an open window, of a swaying curtain bathed in waning orange light, of chiming fishhooks caught up in a gentle current, stirring over swirling fathoms.

These are thoughts of abandoning that husk of tough-skinned fruit to swig instead some purple neon, to drain the nectar from the glow stick dangling around your neck. Of crushing garlands, strings of intricately carved skulls and mollusk shells shattering beneath the calluses of coarse bare feet, while you bang your battered cup on the cantina's lonely table. Here, some glimpses of a shoulder's perfect blade, in those lovely spellbound moments of its first unveiling. Of runic annotations, notions of a changeling, bonfire whispers of the union 'twixt a man and some ancient creature of the deep.

These are inklings of a new and far-out refuge. And if this isn't the first time E has cupped his hands in these tarry, subsurface aqueducts of sound, replenishing the chalice for all us lucky huddled masses, it surely is the deepest pull. This time, the draught is bound up with some other kind of substance, heady and unstable, bewitched and limpid like the slow waters of Tsalal...

Am I flashing? Chances are. But see if you can't hear that distant drum, and may I suggest you take a little something extra for the journey, a little special girding for the long dark road out of the village...

Dynamics are a funny thing, and this Ernest well knows, and keeps his course of navigation free from many forms of nonsense. Because what is verse-chorus-verse but a mirage of difference, a ghost ship pantomiming purpose on the doldrums of an indifferent time signature? What is a hook, if not a place to park a formless lure, itself a simple beckoning to those more inchoate beings down below? Different times call for different changes. Some times call for none. Sometimes you charge ahead, full speed, steering it due south towards your icy destination as the good crow flies. And sometimes you kill the motor, look around and let it drift, blocking out the screaming of the gulls and listening intently to the bubbling of the wake. Rest assured that either way, you will arrive in unfamiliar latitudes.

Listen to this. There is so much else to say about this music, too. If we're not so concerned anymore with breaking away, or breaking down, well maybe it's because we've seen the inner workings of the unshelled juggernaut before, and because we know that what can't hold together must also be of one familiar substance. Maybe better then to gather up the scattered flotsam, to conjure up a multicolored golem from these toxic fragments, these flakes of old eternal verities, these clouds of ash blown in on evening waves from climes beyond. Build a little garden on your landing of some mellifluous constructions, assembled from these pieces of that other place. Draw yourself a map. Yes... what a thing to do!

—ERIK FRYDENBORG, WITH APOLOGIES TO THE LATE RALPH J. GLEASON

