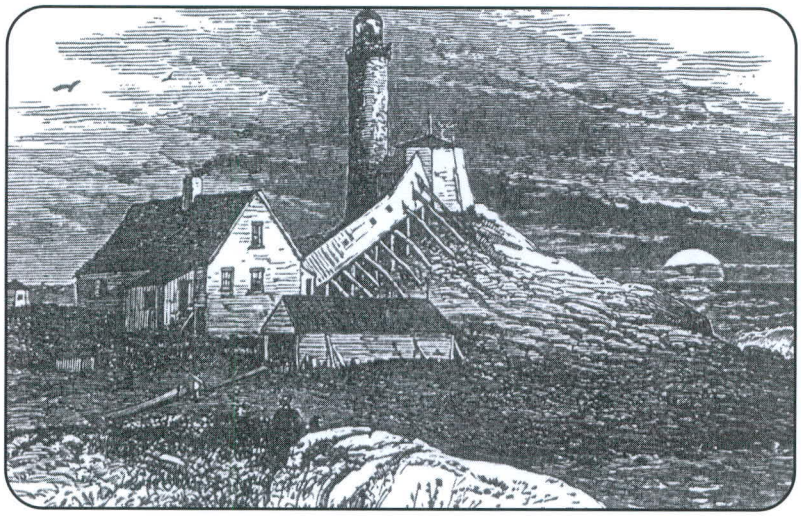


WHITE ISLAND IN THE EARLY DAYS

WATCHING

In childhood's season fair,
On many a balmy, moonless summer night,
While wheeled the lighthouse arms of dark and bright
Far through the humid air;

How patient have I been,
Sitting alone, a happy little maid,
Waiting to see, careless and unafraid,
My father's boat come in;

Close to the water's edge
Holding a tiny spark, that he might steer
(So dangerous the landing, far and near)
Safe past the ragged ledge.

1 had no fears,—not one;
The wild, wide waste of water leagues around
Washed ceaselessly; there was no human sound,
And I was all alone.

But Nature was so kind!
Like a dear friend I loved the loneliness;
My heart rose glad, as at some sweet caress,
When passed the wandering wind.

Yet it was joy to hear,
From out the darkness, sounds grow clear at last
Of rattling rowlock, and of creaking mast,
And voices drawing near!

"Is't thou, dear father? Say!"
That well-known shout resounded in reply,
As loomed the tall sail, smitten suddenly
With the great lighthouse ray!

I will be patient now,
Dear Heavenly Father, waiting here for Thee:
I know the darkness holds Thee. Shall I be
Afraid, when it is Thou?

On Thy eternal shore,
In pauses, when life's tide is at its prime,
I hear the everlasting rote of Time
Beating forevermore.

Shall I not then rejoice?
Oh, never lost or sad should child of Thine
Sit waiting, fearing lest there come no sign,
No whisper of Thy voice!

Partial poem by Celia Thaxter
of Isle of Shoals