

THE HAPPY PLACE

As the temperature continues to drop and the days go from gray to ugly gray, I long for my happy place, St. John in the Virgin Islands. My husband and I have been lucky enough to return to their white sand beaches and aquamarine waters many times. I imagine we're there as the smell of conch fritters frying up at the local beach bar lures us over.



We place an order for a dozen as we sip on rum painkillers while we wait. There's no shame in day-drinking here, it's just what you do.

After lunch, we find a nice beach, settle in with a good book and immediately fall asleep. That painkiller was strong. No matter, there's nothing to do but relax, take a swim, look out at the passing sailboats and think about dinner. We have no cell service here and even that's a blessing.



The only thing that breaks our reverie is the arrival of a swarm of no see-ums around sunset. It's like a tropical alarm clock to get us to move.

We head back to the house we've rented, make ourselves another painkiller and watch the sunset from above Hawksnest Beach.



We're too relaxed to get dressed to go out, so we heat up some leftovers for dinner. As we turn out the lights, the sky reveals a sea of stars. The Milky Way crosses over our house and we even spot a messier within Orion without binoculars. We

know tomorrow will be just like today and the day before and we're fine with that.



If I could only bottle that feeling as I sit here shivering waiting for the oil company to fix our boiler, all would be well in my world.