

Soufriere Hills had not erupted since prehistory. It was unexpected.

SEEING THE MOUNTAIN

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Below
Wake up. The Earth is calling.



Once there were 13,000 inhabitants on the island of Montserrat. Once there was a small capital called Plymouth, with 4,000 residents...

Wake up. The alarm clock is ringing. The Earth is calling. The sun has risen over the waves of the sea to say that the time of unconsciousness is ended. It is morning. Dreams are to take rest and memory processing to cease, even on the idyllic shores of the Caribbean island of Montserrat, a British territory smaller than Bhola.

People are opening their stores in the main street of Plymouth. Mothers are walking their children to the school gate and a fisherman by the seaside has already cast his line. At the dock a yacht is pulling in; at the meagre airport a plane is anticipated; and someone is writing a letter in ink, with a pen. All the usual things must've been, in the days before they looked up to see their mountain again.

Imagine. The circle of the sun, the gravity to hold them, the energy of food and the physics of human movement: the many life-defining forces that bring predictability and comfort. The routines of sea breeze and season; the ebb and flow in the tides; the phases of the moon; and the greeting of friend and neighbour: all the natural systems to promote a laid back sense of continuum. There must've been that usual perception of lives languidly evolving, in small steps barely discernable, like the leeward waves spreading out on the sand.

It's an easy matter that the Montserratians didn't see their mountain, because a mountain that sits nearby all the time will with certainty fade into invisibility.