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Choose an alternative religion
is for the shadows when
something happens to the sun
but when every day is fast who
could understand to stand

there where no law has darkened
the dream will every isolato
will find his mate and mean and mean
another thing choose this
to banish all possible thats
this word has no plural do we.

1 March 2011
Swayback girls with country manners—
a giggle is the shadow of a laugh—
be first on the market and the priests
forgive your transgressions outer.

What won’t is what you say. Said
covables will haunt your habit
creaky floorboards where your mind
can’t get a good night’s leap.

We improvise theology, we swoon
into cellar raptures of common touch
and why not? The skin stays here at least
hen northern trees wake up and leave.

1 March 2011
Not nature but another thing.
Idlewild where I grew tall
migrant flyway and the marsh was steep
a child walking in the fields
is always a stranger. Nothing makes sense
because what is close is also far—

I pick it up and crumble it in my fingers
or chew on the long stems but what does it mean?
I came I thought from another world
where meanings come first. then find the things meant—
mud, cattails, saltstained walkways, old wood, sea.
Later I found those creatures I called ‘you’
and spent my life assuming they were strangers too.

1 March 2011
But were they waiting?
Would it change their lives?
There is an insolence in time
makes us forget
the tenderest addresses—
caresses—the coach
with no one in it—
rubbery lipwork
of a drunken kiss.
Beasts prowl the woods.

1 March 2011
VIEW CAMERA, 8x10

after Philip Whalen

Trying to force the issue is not the issue.
The old bellows cracked and let light in.
The new bellows holds the dark but weighs a ton.
Add to that the weight of what the lens detects, describes, inverts, apostrophizes on ground glass.
Me, proper, holding my own against gravity, staring out the window at a handy tree.
And who can carry us home?

2 March 2011
Find me one thing
that says It’s me!
and I will love it
a long time, a little
at arm’s length maybe,
think fondly of it
but forget to call.

2 March 2011
How do we know what is false
till we forget it? Then what is
or is true stays in mind
solid as a china doorknob
broken from its door, still
smooth from some of our
fingers. Blue and white!

3 March 2011
Can you help me remember?
Are you god, the tiny shadow
of a distant bird moves
fast across my table top in sun?
Sweet taste of a shadow passing—
is that something I could dare?
Or is there more, a fouled anchor
a foundering longboat, a tide?

I went where the horses took me
as far as between between.
They could go no further. Alone
I had to walk the rest of the way,
walking is no different from thinking
only it takes longer. And I’m still not here.

3 March 2011
Can you own this thing?
Can you take it home
and spread it on your sofa
so the lamplight makes it look
like part of your life?
Waking is the strangest weather—
is it still there outside?
When you settle down to watch
the crows in the bare trees
is it still spread beside you?
What new responsibilities
have come down from heaven on your head?
How tentative you reach out to touch!

3 March 2011
LUTETIA

 Walking towards the other
 side of something near.
 Trying to get around
 what isn’t there—
 these are operations
 of the light we called them
 when all we knew
 was what came away
 from our mouths,
 when there was no science
 but what we said.
 That was a better time—
 pretty ships sailed the Seine
 anxious for ocean. We knew
 there had to be a salt
 somewhere of dissolution.
 Prayer wasn’t enough—light
 has to be taught to break.
 Then suddenly we were there—
 an island a mile offshore
 full of chatty priestesses
 who took the shape of seals.
 Light glistened on their flanks
 and our vocabulary overflowed.

 3 March 2011
Is there another me in me
that could stand guard
while I think myself away?

People are always frightened,
always. You can smell it,
see it, count it even in their eyes

blinking, fingers twitching.
I too am terror. What if…
Or what if not…?

But if I could only think
myself away I’d find myself
on the other side of terror

not even bothering to count
or stand sentry. I would be
the face of you when you’re sleeping.

3 March 2011
It doesn’t have to be long,
it’s still a river.
Doesn’t have to flood and murder
as long as it reaches the sea.

3.III.11
PLUTO ABDUCING PROSERPINA

I’ll say it in Lain
because she’s in satin

she is I think my native language
but we never think of him

it’s always the beautiful victim
holds our attention

never the randy monster
whose whole more than human nature

is bursting out of him,
his whole body girds her

lifts here knows her
and in that single seizure

eternity possesses them both
earth is heaven and heaven is hell

the two of them are victims
of the blue flowers round her
the blue earth-speak
that made her bend down

and made him leap out of the ground
to make all the realms of being

suddenly the same.
As now they are too.

3 March 2011
Arid enough for blue weather but the ice
drinks the earth
according to a better rule It all is living,

sparrows and such.

I asked an earner
what do you farm?
he said a bottle
of green wine
a hill of white
flowers one whole
week and then never

I said you must be
among the actual he admitted it

without punctuation
we are lost
the relentless ordinary
does not pause
we and we alone
invented silence
we use it
the way the gods
use color
to make what appears
actually here

silent we listen to all things.

4 March 2011
FORM

I carved the stone
carved it till
it was all round
and showed nothing
but itself
not even a hint
of any other form

and thus, being itself
and only itself,
is took on
the shape of a woman
all the salient and coves
implicit, and she could see

but never me,
never the one
who found her form
deep in alabaster
and left it there
to rule the world
in quiet, that is
I set her free
and from me must she flee—

beauty, what could it be
but perfect stillness
hurrying forever away?

4 March 2011
Dig deep in space to
be more room for surface
skilled the stereotactic
basketwork of Form— this
    be not woman and be not man
be the sacred woven emptiness
wherein a self could, or not, or hold or speak

this form speaks.

Space turns into meaning
where meaning means being)

    suddenly a shape permits.
Exists to draw us in.
What else is form for?

We inhabit what we see. Whose
can we be
    now that we have seen?

5 March 2011
(after Claire Woolner’s installation)
In fact
there is nothing new.

This is the great
mystery, the consolation
time brings to eternity,

everything is old and all made new
all things are used
and used some more.

The Buddha came
and comes again.

5 March 2011