

Votive stations

by [Rich Landers](#) in the [August 25, 2009](#) issue

Silence is misery, said a friend
in a casual comment on the phone.
Elizabeth spent three days with no one
to interrupt her but her own fears.
Lulls during which she noticed
the buzz and pop, resting from the hike
on a stone. Her retreat intended
to evade noise, but she found
the clawing of forest murder
and distant yelps. That's when
she saw a tree, already turned
the color of flame against the others'
ordinary green, like the great voice
of one who had to speak. Not a word
for three days, unable to resist
the conversation released within.
Slow sun upon a single tree
that stands without explanation
on the edge of the meadow
with red leaves, a hawk glides above
the landscape of pines
between silence and speech.