

# 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.