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The Bridge Tom Whalen

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THE BRIDGE

Wittgenstein said: My method is not to sever the hard from the soft, but to see the hardness in the soft.

So we reassessed our situation in light of this arrangement and built a bridge of light, particle by particle, our road crew carted the heavy wheelbarrows of light to the construction site which we first had to rig up, without deceit, to the poles of our longing, then we strung the wires across the divide and began to layer in the tracks. When we had the tracks layered in, we paused and reassessed our reassessment and decided we had to laminate the river, which we did with alacrity and aplomb.

Odelle wanted to place giraffes made of popcorn at the foot of the bridge, but we took a voice vote that scratched that unnuminous notion. Not that numinosity was our main criteria. I, for one, liked the giraffe idea: balloon giraffes, water giraffes, burning giraffes, dacron giraffes, illuminated giraffes, giraffe cars, giraffe planes, wind giraffes . . . but the others said forget the giraffe, would you? So we forgot the giraffe and put a sand grandmother on an air pedestal that lit up like a Christmas tree when it rained.

Then we decided the bridge should be reversible, so we bought books on spirit projecting and hung a tapestry depicting the seven deadly sorrows (sweetness, sight, simplicity, complexity, ambiguity, neverness, and boxes), but this displeased us something fierce, we wailed for a night and a day, then a day and a night, and when we awoke from our frenzy we torched the bridge as we had come to know it and started over.

First we placed the river above the bridge, and the sky beneath the bridge, and the bridge between the river and the sky and then sprayed it with forgetfulness. Next we built a kite out of clouds and the hair of the recently deceased and let that sucker fly into the river. We were happy for about five seconds, then we were not happy. Where were the crowds? Where the gymnasts needed to cross the construction? Where the philosophers to understand us?

Midnight. Dawn lies behind us, dusk before us. We clasp hands as we make our way across. The bridge shimmers, holds.