Judith Skillman

Estrangement

In winter an iced sky lies inside
and alongside the body. Long nights
sleepless, punctuated by sleet.

Age harrows us. We unwind
slowly, our skin thins. The milk film
scans, with its good eye, that past
gone retrograde, left spinning
despite its lack of stars and moon.
In winter we sleep alone. The house

with two stories, its emptied rooms
singular as a waking dream,
or the city seven hours south of Paris
called L’Age. A town so small its church
held only a few pews. A man
without a job, a woman without

her health. Let this chalk sky
go on writing what it knows best:
scrawled winds of another front.

Like the second century martyr Perpetua,
coming now into the arena
to be mauled by lion, hyena, and laughter.