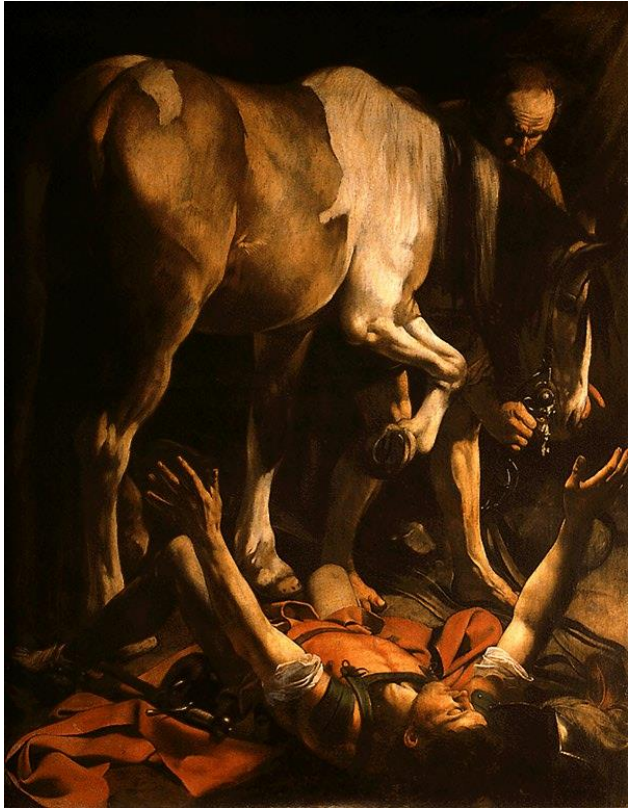


Conversion on the Way to Damascus—Robert Whitehead

Image: *Conversion of St Paul* by Caravaggio



And kingdoms were

made on the backs
of horses, were made
of the thrown-off men
asking *how is a night-
mare an instruction*

cooing it like doves
as an ungentle god
comes to open their cages.

Yours is the kingdom of—

*Where the all-seeing
sun himself could
become a drone &
enter your orchard.*

The all-seeing could
star the inside of your
house. *Could never*
pierce you out

of the kingdom.
The kingdom of—

What does it mean
when a star is inside
your house?

There is
only so much you can do
to not disappear. There
is only so much love
a star can give before

it burns you up. Yours

is the kingdom, and, like
a kingdom, easily lost.

Then, the nightmare
was falling off your horse
and into a spectrum of light
no one else believed.

Where the all-seeing sun
himself could never pierce
you out— don't you see?—

An interior that uncompromisable.

The nightmare now
is sarin, is faction,
white phosphorus, is nerve
agent.

Kingdom of, kingdom of—

When a god is a compound,
how can you be touched by it
and survive? When
loosed on you, when
breathed in, when asphyxia—

a god is impossible to keep
sacred, like the fruit in the
orchard, like the crusade
through it, like the hundred
other words for wounding.

Exodus—Sharon Wang

Image: *Ocean* from Hiroshi Sugimoto



A licking of detritus occurs.
World rises aglitter.
Stage left, V. turns over happenings
like knives without handles.

V. says, by land, by sea,
it must be possible to make passage.
V. says, a fire that cannot
be stoked nonetheless
undresses in front of strangers.

Voyeur, who are you in relation
to your own life?
Here I am, writing you in,
writing you out.

A licking occurs, world rises aglitter.
The sun is a bit in V.'s mouth.

(V. gathers, up,
into a tautness, a tear—unified,

almost spilling.)