NAMING

Don’t say love

say land
say rock and soil

no, don’t say that

say igneous rock and acid soil
say gray and brown
or red clay and ochre desert
say hard thing and soft thing

of the earth

say little pebble, say finest dust
say barn and building built upon
say car and train riding on it

no, don’t say that

say sedan stopping
say freight train

riding on

say man and woman and animal
living there and within

no, don’t say that

say greyhound and koala bear
say man in tweed Irish cap
say woman whose hair falls forward
her breath rising, whose arms
are muscled with long pulling
say someone loves

no, don’t say that

say a man brings pasture roses
say someone holds someone
a long time,
and the darkness goes away

say someone loves

Don’t say dreams

say ocean
say water and salt
no, don’t say that
say saline water and seasalt
say green and slate
or indigo deep and turquoise shallow
say wet thing and sliding thing

of the earth

say smallest drop, say little ripple
say cave and cavern swimming within
say boat and iceberg riding on it

no, don’t say that
say sailboat tacking
say ice pinnacle

riding on

say fish and seaweed and whale
living under and within

no, don’t say that
say pilot fish, rockweed, orca
say merman hiding beneath a ledge
say silkie singing her endless notes
as she swims across the sea
across the deep troughs of the water
say someone dreams

no, don’t say that
say a woman is drifting beneath Orion
say someone’s head is on the pillow
and their sleep is filled with gods,
and the darkness goes away.

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