DON'T TOUCH A THING

Concentrate on revolutionary zeal,
allow us to see optimistic declamations
scattered throughout ourselves.

Life is full of asides, distractions,
poems, discussion and arguments;
there is almost too much going on.

Everybody has a private interpretation
of narrative, certain of what's been said,
but stories can’t fool our children

who are more and more out of time
and place, history and geography,
provoking dissent and challenge.

In a society of slow changes,
rules and rituals are defamiliarised,
gain their own implied meanings.

Dowsing rods and scrying mirrors,
dreamcatchers and smudge sticks,
tell us about what we already know

but is still worth visiting, always
open to interpretation, including
abstract images and cosmic lights.

Faith wraps its duplicitous arms
around me, hovering at the edges
of lockdown. It is a delusion,

combining absence with nothing
at the expense of its narrator.
I found online whisky a bit thin but

it is possible to enjoy a party from afar,
find ways to make sense of the whole,
allowing for symbols and shorthand.

A map is an idea ready to move forward,
points beyond itself, a possible way
of offering directions; what never was

becomes a ghost in other exhibitions.
Paranoid men collected answers, books
and catalogues, made visits to belief,

much of which seems ridiculous now:
crystals, fossils, shells, shaped stones.
Heaven has long been on my radar,

spiritual warfare is as unsettling as
anything overwritten or processed;
everyone and everything is sacred.

I recontextualise what appears real,
juxtapose nature and industry,
find characters in the graveyard

of simplistic stories and new texts.
Self-justification dwarfs the political
but here the poet is foregrounded,

angry at being bored and annoyed.
There is little mysticism or magic in
the conceptual poverty of our lives,

we remain selfish, flawed people
enmeshed in human struggle, desire
and difference, occult conspiracies,

psychologies and tired relationships.
Everyone tries to survive, moves slowly
towards a swamp world and hive mind,

completely different sorts of spaces
for groups and individuals interested in
strange answers to wonderful questions.

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