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Tilt

Jean Sprackland

THE FENCED WOOD

A finger of sunlight points the way
over the floor of dead leaves.
I unlatch the gate and walk in.

I follow the signs:
an acorn
a notched twig
a word written in lichen.

At the centre
a flat stone for a bed.
I lie down to wait.
The cold receives me.
The net of light trembles overhead.

One branch touches the wrist of another.
The breeze catches its breath.

BREAKING THE FALL

Imagine being that fluke of rock
that juts out from the face of the hill,

the rock that breaks the stream's fall,
day and night, for millennia.

The stream runs over, sleek as mercury,
has no choice but to strike you –

shatters into beads that fire away
at more or less predictable angles.

All that varies is the weight of water,
in drought, or after heavy rain;

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the pace of the flow; the pitch
and volume of the shattering.

Imagine the deadlock,
the passion. Imagine the stars.

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