

THE TREE THAT EDGED THE FOREST

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She twirled until her
blue-butterfly printed dress
opened like a parachute.

Then she stopped.

Her parachute deflated
as she looked at
the tree that edged the forest.

“Oh, no! My favorite tree,” she said,
pointing to the trunk
of a white paper birch
limbless,
lying on its back,
and long beetle-hollowed.

I stood silent for a second,
unschooled in the ways
of a young girl’s mind
and surprised by her
mature tree aesthetic.

“Those trees sure are pretty,”
I replied.

“It fell down,”
she lamented.

Should I have explained
that it was giving back
to the earth from which
it came?

That life and death
were inextricably linked?

But a sundrenched butterfly
fluttered from the forest,
stole her eyes,
and I exhaled.

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