

As I fall

by [Leland Seese](#) in the [February 5, 2014](#) issue

*“this deep dread . . . is a great gift from God
for it is the precise point of our encounter with his fullness.”*

—Thomas Merton

The old slough appears in this dream,
muddied, shallow, and with leeches gathered
in the overhanging grass along the banks.

The barricaded overpass floats forty feet
above the water, closed to buses, cars, and trucks.

It seems the briefest fall to an observer
on the shore. But new awareness comes
when the plunge protracts, weighted
like the purple-orange air of the Grand Canyon
dusk murmured up its eastern wall.

As I fall, time dissolves into something different
from eternity. I surrender to the dread
and to the peace of being and oblivion.

Death is merely incidental in this dream.
I watch my body as I feel bones crunch
against the earth, and hear my breath pass out of me
by a sort of mystical ventriloquy.

Sprawled on spongy ground beside the overhanging grass
as some vast something brushes past, dangerous
and gentle, I wait with patience to be devoured
or to be given second birth.