

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.