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## Falling

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# Falling

By Rachel Zucker

Meandering through the redwoods,  
creating our own path,  
we stumbled upon a fallen tree.  
Enormous, with the roots exposed  
and protruding out into the shadowed light.  
Fragrant with earth,  
the bark was rippled with striations  
of color like the bright stripes  
of a barber shop pole.  
You climbed up onto it with ease,  
balancing with arms  
outstretched—a tightrope walker  
tiptoeing across the trunk.  
You smiled and beamed at me from up high  
as I looked back at you,  
searching for a way to get up there  
to be with you.  
The giant extended lengthwise and made contact  
with the soil, the area concealed by  
fresh shoots and growth.  
I pulled back the ferns, climbed up onto  
the trunk, and made my way to you,  
dodging branches, ducking under them  
with clumsy hesitation.  
I felt you take my hand and together  
we stood in the center of the redwood,  
staring down at the forest floor below us  
scattered with pine needles and olive-green leaves  
and escaped boughs.  
You steadied my shaking body,  
pulled me close, and pushed your lips to mine,  
together, the two of us, silhouettes  
in the fading light.