In the Night Yard

Dixie L. Partridge

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In the Night Yard

For J.

Roots rib the ground where dark grows out from trees, and I stumble among our own plantings: birch, filbert, cherry. It’s for silence . . . no, the form of silence . . . that I turned off house lamps and stepped out alone into shapes holding between them a present more tangible in an absence of light—a quiet that keeps poised, on the verge of spill, whatever moments mean.

No breeze flutes down limbs and trunks; a scent of ripening grapes hangs faintly. When I look at a slant, I see paler night in the west sky, like that aura reached as darkness begins to become light. Time that rivers swiftly in our lit hours pools now, still and deepening; the slowed self seems to float and sink at once . . .

... and you say my name with that upturn at the end, not sure to expect I’m here. Solitude moves instantly to something fuller . . . who I am linked to who you are, and though some say love is a kind of grief, it’s only that absence is carved so exactly out of presence.

—Dixie L. Partridge