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the thorn

it seems like sacrilege

for a man

with hands gnarled like a jack pine,

cracked and knotty,

to be holding the garden sylphs.

but he is just a pious man

with bulbous knees

paying homage

to his companions:

plucking out marauders

with suspicious tendrils,

murmuring to nascent buds,

singing to the blooms,

explaining a move

to an interloping slug,

a man nursing

his gardens

by moods and myths.

(once I even saw him

tape a wisp of bark

to the bald spot

on a birch tree).

Lisa Richardson

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