

PERFECTION IS AT ITS HEART SORRY

Heidi Johannesen

The night is unworkable. The tree outside
never sleeps.

Imagine how crazy it is—
all the roots and branches it's stuck in.
And the ground—what if it wants to get up
and climb into the tree

in the dark?

There is no center unless you choose one. You have
to choose one. Even the world needs
a home in the dizzy universe.

The leaf finds a shape
if it can

and hangs on.

The leaves fall because they are dead.
They are not trying to find their roots.
They are not symbols.

* * *

And there is nothing beyond you
that hasn't taken you with it, though maybe
it's holding back
needing something to say.

Words won't do. They think they're doctors.
They turn you around and around until you fall off.

They say try thinking about a nice place.
They say the world might be easier
when you are off the list of possibilities.
They say pretend the tubes aren't in your nose
and it's snowing.
If they say they don't know then

they don't know,
but definitely if they chop you up
they won't be able to find you

or the good news of the ground
where the darkness comes without falling,

you understand.