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THE ALTERED WORLD

by Richard Brostoff

“So The Lord God banished him
from the garden, to till the soil
from which he was taken.”

—Genesis

In time, the wish for return
to that first paradisaal home faded.

Or so I thought.

A ghostly gesture now, the memory

of what had been drifted in mind,
more feeling than an image,

a sense of something hovering,
as if moving without a body.

Still, in the recurring dream at night
running beside the river’s surge,

sensing the unslaked fire in the stars,
a reservoir of ardor stirred,

like a sea tide hauling me back
toward an eternal sea,



its currents carrying me back
to an abundance half-remembered—

blurred, endless flowerings,
profusions of leaves,

pollen and nectar scent,
and in my bones a certainty

that I belonged. No more.
I'd wake to a dry country,

foreign to myself, acacia rotting
in the sun, the slow bees buzzing,

the brown and fallen deadwood
where I worked the earth all day.
A dilemma then: How to regard
the coming of this altered world

in which I found myself suspended,
half-floating in the past?

How to seize again a sense
of presence, not waver

between two parallel worlds,
not be caught

in the sticky honey of time?