THE TREE THAT EDGED THE FOREST

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She twirled until her blue-butterfly printed dress opened like a parachute.

Then she stopped.

Her parachute deflated as she looked at the tree that edged the forest.

“Oh, no! My favorite tree,” she said, pointing to the trunk of a white paper birch limbless, lying on its back, and long beetle-hollowed.

I stood silent for a second, unschooled in the ways of a young girl’s mind and surprised by her mature tree aesthetic.

“That those trees sure are pretty,” I replied.

“It fell down,” she lamented.

Should I have explained that it was giving back to the earth from which it came?

That life and death were inextricably linked?

But a sundrenched butterfly fluttered from the forest, stole her eyes, and I exhaled.

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