



1999

(Un)balance

Sandra Birmingham

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Yesterday I leaned against the wind,
rested in its arms and felt it push
invisible at my back.
It pressed. I leaned,
leaned hard until I broke
through, and stumbled
toward the ground, knowing the wind
can't be depended upon, still hoping
a sudden breeze might catch and
push me up again, balanced on nothing.

It's a delicate thing, this sitting on air.
Settle in, arms out, eyes closed and a gust
knocks you forward, or worse
the air is sucked still,
leaving only gravity.

And so it is with us sometimes
when we forget to cling
to solidness, when we let go,
let the shadows scratch us hollow,
until we shiver, transparent as wind.

In those thin times we lie back,
tense, soul to soul,
each trusting that the other can be trusted,
coordinating movements while we hope
that nothing will upset the equilib-
rium and cause you
to topple, or
me to pitch
headlong.