

Shorts Lines

Again overnight so late in the year all bushes are bare,
just off the path, just under the underbrush, bright against sere,
bright as a flower to the first jogger—he shakes his head. Yes,

Yet another pair of undershorts here. How hardy they are,
the flowers, he thinks, who keep coming out though tempera-
tures sink.

How delicate too, this breed that goes from blooming to seed all

in a few minutes of night. And the fall front limbs through the
frost

and dark at the end must be beautiful! he laughs with what
breath

he can spare. He keeps running onward, sure it's familiar,

the light that forces all the opening of buds. He's seen it
before, most often in dreams, flooding the clothes the stranger
there

wears like shadows. Oh he knows how moonshine can soften, a
fist!

And what's leftover after? His laughter in the morning sun,
his throat and his tongue, a lonely flower—except perhaps for
the one he just past, that old blossom, torn, unforlorn cotton.

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