

Gina Vallis

where grace

deep fiddlethroat clearing
bow drawn on the lowest string

where grace
is the act by which one touches the string
briefly below the note being played

as well try to string the melody
into words

as peer puzzled into the empty frame
for sound

and still...

that afternoon we took our instruments to the water
followed one phrase to another upriver
until our breath shortened and our legs grew tired
bent the branches, felt the backlash of a picking strain
lost the beat, scrambled round, found it again
struggled the crest, and over the edge,
flung one single note —

held fast, until at last,
it found its place