

**'The Arc of A Swing in Autumn?'**  
**Jean O'Brien**

When she is seated  
the swing's ropes pull tau  
then arc from the ground to the sky,  
Chasing the crest of the moon.  
Higher and higher she pushes,  
branches hold their silence as wind rushes by.  
Shadows scatter and are undone.  
She goes to ground: displaced air  
hauls its light cargo back.

This is her cradle, her sling. Its highs  
and lows hold her in a temporary bow  
as she spans the distance between grass  
and mid-air. She is shattering the light  
of the sun, I hold her image framed  
I know it is autumn because the leaves are gone.  
All I can see is the outline of the tree,  
and my mother on the swing  
in the time before me.