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POEM IN ENGLISH

ELISE PARTRIDGE

CHEMO SIDE EFFECTS: MEMORY

Where is the word I want?

Groping

in the thicket,

about to pinch the

dangling

berry, my fingerpads

close on

air.

I can hear it

scrabbling like a squirrel

on the oak's far side.

Word, please send over this black stretch of ocean

your singular flare,

blaze

your topaz in the mind's blank.

I could always pull the gift

from the lucky-dip barrel,

scoop the right jewel

from my dragon's trove....

Now I flail,

the wrong item creaks up

on the mental dumbwaiter.

No use —

it's turning

out of sight,

a bicycle down a

Venetian alley —

I clatter after, only to find

gondolas bobbing in sunny silence,

a pigeon mumbling something

I just can't catch.