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THE BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDENS

by the Japanese pavilion,
turning, the lily pond
snatching at slant rays

the path receding behind
crookedly; a shaggy arm
rises from the water,

Japanese elm, a broken branch.
water smooth and dark
laps the swollen bark

berries clutter the return,
the branch at last sight
half in, half out

underfoot, fallen berries
busily pop, dark
juice flooding dark earth

and clattering the path,
last year's leaves unearthed
by a wet-kiss breeze

parade along the via media
not yet swept by the man
with the long-handled broom

light squints through branches
where tight-packed buds
pebble the craquelure

on the bench, a girl cradles
a silvery cell phone
in both hands and a

chestnut leaf hesitates overhead
for a long moment before
deciding to fall

by Stuart Jay Silverman