

Wilderness House Literary Review 1/4

Once I Fell

Fast. That's how it happens in a world
of free will and mistake. Too busy to think
of double-knotting shoes, testing brakes.
Too rushed or young to view accident

as blueprint. I heard the screech, the sick
thud. The ball rolled downhill toward me
in the gutter. I picked it up, without thinking.
The skin was balonied from driveways,

still warm with a child's hands. She was
screaming as she left the car, not that
argument scream or one a woman uses
to reprimand her kid for poor grasp
of arithmetic, but the kind that tells you
something is really wrong. I used to live

on that block, chase the whim of basketballs
with no worry of god, shoelaces defiantly
loose. I had scabs to prove it and the luck
of slow days. I almost bounced the ball,

but returned it to gravity instead, to a puddle
of yesterday's rain. It followed me down
the hill as I turned and left, like it remembered
me. As if it were lonely, and wanted to play.