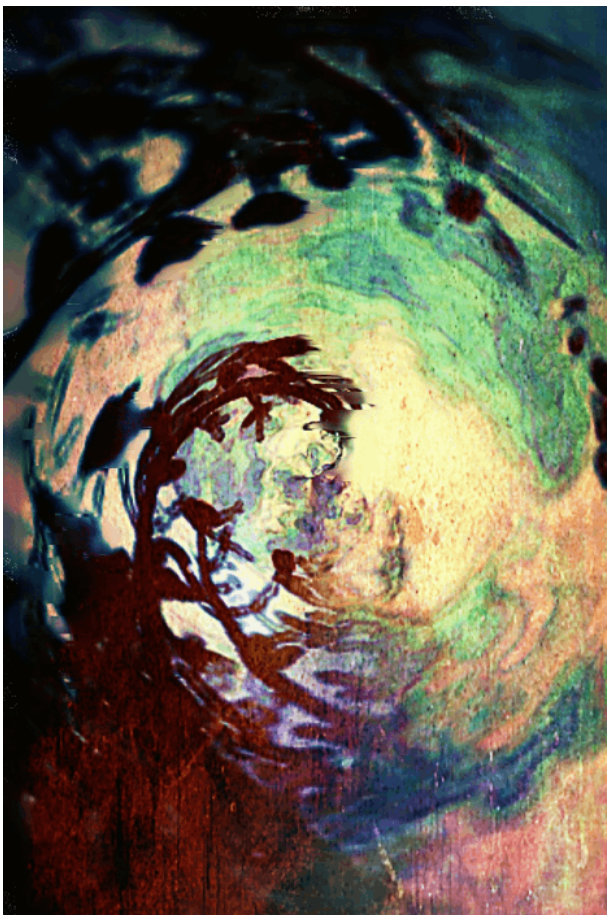
POETRY

Loosening

by Stefan Raffl



"Branching" by Leslie Brown

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I kneel in the garden,
loosening the tangled roots
of a young plant.

White filaments bound
to their pot’s shape.

First they resist,
then, slightly, give.

I work the soil,
feel for stones,
the cooler dark.

Set the root ball in,
press harder.
A small violence.

Breaking.
Then spreading.

The plant does not know
what branches bear a bird’s weight.

We know words
for light through leaves.
For the closeness of hearts.

None for this.

Your hand
finds my face.

Cradles,
loosens.

Not everything
opens.

Your thumb
at my cheek

as if listening
for what has yet to reach.

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