

The Splinter

by [Robert Heard](#) (September 2023)



Ascent III, Ferdinand Hodler, 1894

The sinews of my knees unstrung—
Too far up, afraid to look—
So tight I held the edge, and clung,
That in my hands it cracked and broke.

Then someone higher I descry
Tossing in his frantic search,
When something fell, that missed my eye—
I heard a cry, and gave a lurch:

A splinter passed me from above,
And fell still further down below—
From here to there, too fast to know
What it might be the token of:

Dropped by accident, or thrown
For reasons none would after own,
No one seeing the end or length;
No one knowing his own strength.

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Robert Heard was born and educated in Toronto, Canada, and is retired from work in the city's library system. His avocations are poetry, and illustration.

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