

THE POEMS

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Malling Abbey, May 2011

I remember solitude.
The Sisters had their work.
The others in our group

had gone to visit Rochester Cathedral.
I'd opted out, preferring to be on my knees
pulling weeds in the hard, dry kitchen garden.

Later I found a place to pray,
a stool on one side of the cloister,
part glassed in, part open to the square —

cobbles, grass, stone flags, central pool,
a gently rippling spring with waterlily leaves
ready as open hands to receive the drifting spray.

I stayed as long as presence in the silence —
pool, spring, lilies — my soul filling and overflowing
in a calling to this way —

not community but contemplation —
templing with — attending to an interior garden,
my own *hortus conclusus*.

White Brook

A gap in the branches —
I glance aside — arrested step —
the water in the White Brook
has stopped short

to quiver in the sun,
giddy with joy,
elbowing
mossy rocks.

If I gaze long enough
on the bright skittering mirror,
I slip right through
straight to the quick.

How could I not bow?