

Jo Shapcott
Viral Landscape

Before I was bounded; now I've begun to leak...
– Helen Chadwick

I went outside looking and looking
for a garden and the hill. I have lost
my shadow and my oak and my night sweat.
The field was just mown and the summer

so hot there was no green in it,
layers of russets and yellows,
and I was swelling with mosquito
bites and I was listening to Fado.

The trees around the perimeter
were a block of solid colour,
shockingly uni-green by contrast.
(my stomach fluttered at the sight – and

gut epithelium is five days old at most)
Look further into the stands of trees
and everything changes (my cerebral
and visual cortex is as old as me). The eye

can't locate an individual shade:
it's all delicate tips and hints
of green rolling in the wind.
We are moving and I can't see a thing.