

# The green shiver

by [Luci Shaw](#) in the [May 3, 2011](#) issue

The forest floor bleak, choked  
with old leaves, winter wet. Against  
the evidence, buds on the wild dogwoods  
glisten, listen for a signal, lining up  
for bloom-time—when to burst and who'll  
be first? Every year, it's all according  
to weather, the wait for the heat-throb,  
wind fresh through the naked  
birch trunks longing to get green.  
The pressure's on, like listening for a  
starter pistol, finger on the trigger.

Spring is wound tight enough to let go  
any minute. Overarching the ravine,  
the cedars start their annual scatter of yellow  
sexual dust for the next generation.  
The clematis resists her tedium of cold and brown,  
cancels her winter sleep with a vertical thrust  
up the trellis, like a slow shooting star.

How can we help but hope, sprouts  
urged to fulfill a kind of promise—  
a covenant with the world that in unfolding,  
leaf tips flaring up and out, woody hearts pregnant  
with bloom and blessing, we will drink rain, light,  
heat for our emerald living. We face the sun  
full on—its lavish encouragement for cold to lift,  
shift, and move away. Holding on, ready for  
that shiver, a sliver of thrill like a jade thread  
through a labyrinth, when within us  
something fresh and green explodes.