

Treescaping, South

by [Sarah Gordon](#) in the [January 2024](#) issue

## 1

### **Longleaf Pine**

Slivers of life, bundles  
and rolls and bags.  
Subtle, *Subtilis*:  
finely woven  
ground traps,  
hiding places.  
Did you know  
the needles make  
baskets and soft paths  
as well as paper cuts?

## 2

### **Magnolia**

My mother had a pair of ten-foot  
clippers resembling giant tweezers,  
and with them she'd snip the blossoms  
way high up. They'd fall into our arms  
mostly, some hit the ground, but  
we took care not to bruise or lose  
a petal of those openhearted gifts,  
that consecrated beauty.

## 3

### **Chinaberry**

What a pelt of soft hurt  
those berries could be—  
small golden projectiles  
to aim at the enemy  
or squash beneath  
your feet. Do you prefer  
to climb for assault  
or hover below  
and cover your head?

#### **4**

#### **Dogwood**

The crown of thorns  
and Christ's wounds:  
The flowers little bloodstained +'s.  
I touched the hurt to see  
if the scarlet would smear  
and make me part  
of that tree.  
I don't think I thought  
to pray.