

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.