

The Red Maple

by [Peter Dreyer](#) (June 2022)



The Red Maple, Alexander Young Jackson, 1914

Life is hard, but only fatal in the end.

–Robert Lowell, letter to Adrienne Rich, June 23, 1970

You're green, tree,
you're green, and leaves
will hide your wound;
that broken branch

storm severed, now,
snagged topsy-turvy
on a nearby bough,
will drop somehow.

And we, green also,
in this refracted "all,"
spy the *selva oscura*
and coming fall:

our fractal futures
pierce the sky;
some part may live,
but part will die.

Green, Lorca says,
I wish you to be:
green the mountain,
green the sea.

May 7, 2022

References: *selva oscura*: Dante, *Divine Comedy: Inferno* 1.2: "mi ritrovai per una selva oscura" (I found myself in a dark wood); "Lorca": Federico García Lorca's "Romance sonámbulo": "Verde que te quiero verde. / Verde viento. Verdes ramas. / El barco sobre la mar y el caballo en la montaña."

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Peter Richard Dreyer is a South African American writer. He is the author of *A Beast in View* (London: André Deutsch), *The Future of Treason* (New York: Ballantine), *A Gardener Touched with Genius: The Life of Luther Burbank* (New York: Coward,

McCann & Geoghegan; rev. ed., Berkeley: University of California Press; new, expanded ed., Santa Rosa, CA: Luther Burbank Home & Gardens), *Martyrs and Fanatics: South Africa and Human Destiny* (New York: Simon & Schuster; London: Secker & Warburg), and most recently the novel *Isacq* (Charlottesville, VA: Hardware River Press, 2017).

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