

VINE MAPLE

Green beneath green.
All spring and summer they hide in the understory,
then in late August each leaf begins to burn.
After the alder and big leaf maples
are stripped by wind and rain,
they flare into sight,
embers still smoldering
amidst the rain-black trunks,
they grip their leaves a week, or two longer.
But even they will be bared
to their skeletal selves
before the rain-dark day
drains quickly into solstice night.
Now, the sun sweetened sap
has sunk into the soil-bound roots,
buds are clenched tight,
gripping their dream of dappled light
when each new leaf opens its palm
to greet the return.
Green beneath green.

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