

## Clearcut

*Shotpouch Creek, Oregon*

Katrina Hays

What does vine maple know,  
glowing vibrant and hot,  
her crimson a shout  
in the torn landscape?

What private language  
murmurs her veins,  
tells her to change  
before even a hint of autumn?

I want to curve my body  
over this stubbled hillside; I want  
to comb through understory,  
find the spiral truth:

*Yield and overcome*  
*The shape changes, but not the form*  
From the body of stump —  
flicker, fox, fire.

*Italicized lines by Lao-Tzu, translated by Stephen Mitchell*