

Treescaping, South

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

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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.