

## Forgiveness

Maureen Hynes

In my hair I carry the seed blossoms  
of several Norway maples—each moment  
beneath their ample shade a rainfall  
of futurity and chance. How plentiful  
their tiny yellow blossoms, how thickly  
they carpet the flagstone walks, umbrellas,  
tables, chairs—an overabundant  
year, say the city arborists.

I don't want to malign any tree  
but almost daily I mourn the magnolia  
that sickened and died, its roots  
girdled, its light and air stolen, its soil  
poisoned by the leaf fall of the three  
Norway maples who command  
our tiny front yard. I keep trying  
to forgive their invasiveness, forgive

the city for planting so many of them,  
but forgiveness is useless, for me  
and for them. I will never harden  
my body or stretch my limbs  
far into the sky, never hold  
a goldfinch in the crook of my elbow  
or reach my fingers deeply into the earth  
for residues of groundwater.

From *Take the Compass*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023