

Poem by Richard Wilbur

Green

Tree-leaves which, till the growing-season's done,
Change into wood the powers of the sun,

Take from that radiance only reds and blues.
Green is a color that they cannot use,

And so their rustling myriads are seen
To wear all summer an extraneous green,

A green with no apparent role, unless
To be the symbol of a great largesse

Which has no end, though autumn may revoke
That shade from yellowed ash and rusted oak.

Richard Wilbur, a Fellow of the American Academy since 1959, was the second poet to be named U.S. poet laureate. His volumes of verse include "The Beautiful Changes" (1947), "Things of This World" (1956; Pulitzer Prize), "New and Collected Poems" (1988; Pulitzer Prize), and "Mayflies" (2000). He has also published numerous translations of French plays, several books for children, and two collections of prose pieces. He is Emeritus Professor of English at Smith College.

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