

"Just one look more with what you say in mind,  
And I give up"; which last look came to nothing.  
But though they now gave up the search forever,  
They clung to what one had seen in the other  
By inspiration. It proved there was something.  
They kept their thoughts away from when the maples  
Stood uniform in buckets, and the steam  
Of sap and snow rolled off the sugarhouse.  
When they made her related to the maples,  
It was the tree the autumn fire ran through  
And swept of leathern leaves, but left the bark  
Unscorched, unblackened, even, by any smoke.  
They always took their holidays in autumn.  
Once they came on a maple in a glade,  
Standing alone with smooth arms lifted up,  
And every leaf of foliage she'd worn  
Laid scarlet and pale pink about her feet.  
But its age kept them from considering this one.  
Twenty-five years ago at Maple's naming  
It hardly could have been a two-leaved seedling  
The next cow might have licked up out at pasture.  
Could it have been another maple like it?  
They hovered for a moment near discovery,  
Figurative enough to see the symbol,  
But lacking faith in anything to mean  
The same at different times to different people.  
Perhaps a filial diffidence partly kept them  
From thinking it could be a thing so bridal.  
And anyway it came too late for Maple.  
She used her hands to cover up her eyes.

"We would not see the secret if we could now:  
We are not looking for it any more."

Thus had a name with meaning, given in death,  
Made a girl's marriage, and ruled in her life.  
No matter that the meaning was not clear.