

T R E E S

Trees spill their seed in the air.
They will go where
they will go in my eye.

The houses of the never-to-be-rich
stretch and stretch their chimneys,
but they can't tell where it is.

Up above the State Flag flies
the National Anthem. I ask you,
Which side is the eagle on?

And the trouble with emblems is the trouble
with thought. Trees at least
have their seasonal consolations: seeds, shade, fall and firewood.

I've never lived among trees,
so the differences don't matter:
like Negroes are there being Negroes,

they're always there being trees.
The children in them are being something else,
and I like that,

because high powered public men, living two hours ahead of themselves,
can only associate with each other:
My associates and I, we try hard

*to do what we do. We season our optimism
with caution. We never eat our words.*

The trees are eating dirt. The trees say, *acorns, apples.*

Now let me rise
to my conclusion
from the heart, if I can,

and lift up every man in his season,
may he grow ripe and seed:
stretching like trees, like children

wiggling our fingers and shouting, *Jesus*, like Negroes,
Lord, making it all over again,
new and clean in the rain.