

1970

# Trees

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## 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.