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.

27 John Morgan