gaze

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We accept you
As living sentient beings
Only when we gaze on you--
As an inhabited body:
The metaphor:
Your branches—arms
Your trunk—a torso
Your leaves chattering
Susurrus susurrus

Your body belongs to us
Attiring with seasons
Dis-attiring
You hold power over us
Like the weeping willow
Pensive, wet at the river’s edge
Where narcissus drowned

We name your ugly cousin
Sycamore with her psoriatic peeling skin
Your seductive sister
Sweet maple dripping on our pancakes
And female ginkgo--
Full of soft fleshy stinking seeds
We love you the best.

Ebony, we won’t forget ebony
Ancient ebony,
Black root of earth ebony
We know you, Trees.
We own you, Trees.
The logging trucks pitch and roll
Along the narrow rural roads
To buzzing sawmills,
To Carolina furniture factories,
To those snippety smug euro homes
Consuming warm red
Cool white oak planking
Under foot.

You are like the lungs of the earth,
You are a simile converting
The sun into hope
We trust you will
Baptize us in oxygen.