

# gaze

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KATHERINE V, WILLIS

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.

# occupy

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KATHERINE V. WILLIS

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.

