

THE SEED OF MANY TREES

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The history of faith is told each day in the movements
Of trees in a wind. Storm-squalls of rage, motherly calm,
A gesture of forgiveness in the side-to-side swish of aspens.

Through a gap in the pines appeared a branch branched as a river,
The body split into two channels, each cleft, each cleaving,
Matter and antimatter, mother and unborn, body and soul.

Blake claimed he saw angels in a tree but not what tree.
Eliot buried his garlic and sapphires beneath the *axis mundi*.
Could the tree of heaven perhaps be a tree-of-heaven?

Whenever we love, whatever we love, we dance like leaves
In a hailstorm, constantly pierced by tear-shaped ice.
We ought to let go, drift down, but have to be torn away instead.

Mathematicians, genealogists, and geneticists alike use "tree"
To name the endless brachiation of data nodes and descendents.
Musicians have yet to find a form that suits the word's unfurling.

The seed of this poem grew from many trees. I name them
Axle-tree, Yggdrasil, Rood, Sephirot, Golden Bough, Tree of Life,
The sunlit sycamore in which I first beheld the face of God.