**Cottonwood Sagas & Horse Latitudes**

 floating as tidal plain or still as a girded fountain

yet \* aqueous \* drifting crawling

 shooting thick & rife

as river shallows

 beneath the earth’s crust/ tracing & bonding/ grazing

 as suckling tubers working their way up – as floodwaters

receding – breathe & feed cambium’s girthed

frontier – as well the pith

 & heartwood – the firmament waits \*gravid \*

 fecund or patiently spectral in tears

silken/ shimmering \* diecious \*

as in *Deltoides Monilifera Wislizeni*

 & I look for the secret five-point stars

formed unfretted clandestine/ hermetic/ sequestered

 pressed in herbalised annals

– is it myth or truth how equus emits alpha waves

 that in their calm & clarity heal

& soothe –

& in scientific observation a female tree

 blooms blood red with seed clothed

 in sham snow – & oh apply the down so say

Anishinaabe

as absorbent & astringent to any open sore

& it’s then I notice

 the scruffy young man putting his feet up on the chair

 next to mine but not before he first lays

down his jacket \* buffer or aegis \* I wonder

recalling how one-hundred-and-fifty-one

 different kinds of bird bones – dating

to the very last extended Neanderthal family –

 unearthed add up to one quarter of all passerines

extant in Europe today & I consider the indices

of part & parcel

 of roots we all share come to rest

as windblown & fallen limbs/ just find one

 for me will you & snap it while I figure

where I stand – nowhere close to the tale

of 30° north & south

 of the equator when – according to legend –

sailors to the New World stalled in the calmest seas

& for want of water themselves threw the horses

 overboard & perhaps some swam to shore thereby

reintroducing equine life post-Ice Age

 – so science says – but the People already here

thirty-thousand years or more entirely

 disagree while in my neck of these woods

radices wreak havoc with sidewalks & driveways invading

sewer pipes & septic systems & cottony waft clogs

my air conditioner & heat pump & still Night Sky Spirit

 decides we need more brilliance

up in the heavens

& asking Wind to send gusts so sharp & hard

the Cottonwood’s boughs break & protean stars

 – ensorcelled –

leap out from their cellulose coffin

 & gratefully freed/ aflame

take their turns in a delirious race to find fit

 place in boundless gloam as sparkle

& gleam in the night sky & no matter where they alight

 or how we greet them say *thank you*