

Forestry Song, Movement 7

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 The characters to note in studying trees are:
 leaf, flower, bark, bud, bud arrangement,
 leaf scar, tree form.

 Wharton & Barbour

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Now the hillside in two pine-row rivulet
mudslid wheelrut hacks, an erosion track,
 the graven scar, made by chainsaw roar,

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 limbs gone to the pile, stems shewing.

In pure stands the million-year climax association

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 but a beech mount & river bottom.

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For basswood, yellow buckeye

 --bitternuts in spiny husk
 smelld rotten

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Or red oak, white oak fibers insinuated between the vertical
 and one simply MUST cut
 as exposure of a slab
 will show the pithy
 medullary rays, prized by
 the craftsman for mirrors of oak.

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 Gods were created, or red-maple;
 swamp-lover,

whose darker-haired cousin dewy-aspected hemlock
lies half-buried in snow, the true evergreen.

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Or for black walnut, cherry, shagbark hickory--
where grey thin tough vertical strips stretch
angular, limbs fulfilled nut blessing.

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If then, the nature of outcrop affects physiography,
 you may locate by calcareous rock
 where the chestnut smell trailed downwind to linger
amid the mass of tulip poplar from Chimney Rock;
 whose promontory on the geologic map,
an outlook above lesser trees of the mix.

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Dogwood, redbud, sassafras, honey locust,
yellowwood, birch, white ash,
 and formerly, chestnut

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 --whose yellow spikes
 might have shook a nervous sprite of
 blown sperm.

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done