

# Sycamore on Big Branch

by Jim Minick

White arms cradle the moon,  
cup Mars and Venus,  
and on windy nights, rock the stars.

At dawn, the osprey launches,  
the white-faced fish hawk  
reeling in the sun.

By day, the white arms wave in  
nuthatch and redstart, nestle young  
on ribbons of wood, limber and leafed.

Each veined leaf, ridged  
and valleyed, is a map  
of the face of the sun;

each green plate of bark  
captures that watery sun,  
filters it to rainbow-drops of sap.

At the base, the corky trunk hollows  
to beetle teeth, ant caves,  
chickadee nests, raccoon dens.

We sit on this giant tree's knees,  
a living bench covered by nutshells,  
a gathering of generations of squirrels.

Under us, the sycamore's roots explode,  
a fireworks booming slow,  
a pulling at the earth's core.

High in the top, from fingertips,  
star-fragments birth  
into pollen, then drift away.