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Cottonwood

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COTTONWOOD

Turkeys' roost,
 Owls' perch
 Hunters' stand.
 Giant tree of the prairie stream.

The constant wind sends seeds on wing mile for mile,
 And a little water, once in awhile,
 in sandy soil can make a tree.

Not too dumb, this mighty plant.
 Greens up late, one of the last, and
 grudgingly drops the russet leaves,
 But not until November.

Some seek its pulp for paper,
 and others will take the green paper to let it be felled.
 That is wrong.
 It is sad.
 This wood is worth more to Man as tree,
 And much, much more to beast.
 Make paper from forest pine, if you must,
 But leave the prairie tree stand tall.
 Keep ax and blade away!

Listen to the rustle.
 Enjoy the green.
 The shade.
 Let clamor squirrel and creeper
 Let crow call out atop a century's growth.
 And Man, plant now and then a new member of this tribe.
 Save the prairie's majesty! ✱

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