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## Legends of Autumn

I walked by the stream  
running over stones  
around and under black stones  
I walked over grey stones  
between large stones.

The stream ran  
low in its banks  
clear  
past two large  
live cottonwood trees  
whose leaves began to yellow  
past  
the ancient dead tree with holes  
where flickers nest in spring

Above the spring  
that feeds Cottonwood Creek  
she waited for me  
in shade of stones  
shade of a small  
ancient juniper tree  
gathered into herself  
in contemplation  
of the passage  
from summer to fall  
toward winter  
white on the plain

I showed her the skull.  
"Buffalo," I said.  
She touched it  
held it  
then handed it back

I wore it like a mask  
looked through bleached eye openings.  
Bison everywhere on the plain,  
graze slowly  
through tall grass  
gone sere

toward winter  
white on the plain

The stream below me  
runs clear  
over stones  
between  
and under black stones

Buffalo wolves follow the herd

Wind blows across the plain

I stand on the high place  
above the plain  
watch toward winter  
white on the plain