

The Bigamist

Yellow-billed white ducks
have gathered among apples
fallen under the catalpa tree.
"Nonsense," she said and would not
look, though he thought
the assemblage an enchanted bower.

"apples should be held hard and
round in the hand," she said,
"ducks be beheld in water."
but in the dense shade of
a catalpa, how tenuous the one,
how marginal the other.

By the time apples were cider,
and ducks roasted, he stood
alone beside that tree
thinking its seed pods were
like old stogies hung from
a burnt-out fire-watch tower.

William McLaughlin