

The Cottonwood People

Faint. Uncombed. Awash in rain.

They share the kind of beauty shared by older women.

Rhapsody in wind. Buds,
not leaves: the small greens crowding up behind them.

Music, if one could see it, its wicker, its cursive strain.
Spruce, which has the heavier sails, flapping.

You are everything you feel beside the river. (Seamus Heaney)

Through the silver-paned bark, the diamond pores of

sloughed off skin. If I saw my soul, she would be this tree,
and I would love her.

Placing stops between the strings, a composer
warps the score though making noise is never the intention.

One can draw anything on paper and ask a musician to play it.
For instance, a violinist known for her sheer nerves.

It is good to be cold, to remember cold. Hushed by rain,
to be ordained in a dry place. Suppleness of the word *posture*.

By the time my friend received the diagnosis, she was no longer
prepared to accept it—

an afterimage shot with stores of pollen.