

Cottonwood

By Scott Lutz

Mammoth Cottonwood outside Mabel's window,
tell me, please, whisper what you've seen.
The joys and sorrows, the plans-bent and straight, the promises-kept and shattered,
the lover's bitter sweet pain, swept away, alive and dead,
folded, compressed in time, to this second, 300 years brings tears to my eyes.

I arrive mid-summer, July has nearly rotted out,
To see you and all your brothers and sisters suffering,
stressed by fires, drought, and time.
Yet over the Pueblo you stand unmoved, unperturbed, a little taller,
a sentry tower, knowing, watching, silent, keeping.

Each year for the last three I've come
to this sacred place to study and dream.
All of me aches to share this heaven,
this magic with another on a journey as noble,
to share with someone, the one with the angle's heart of fire, the writer's soul.

Lonely, searching, I walk to you, greeting, paying respect, then asking you,
reaching as for my unknown lover's face,
my hand gingerly on your grey-brown crust, overgrown and gnarled.
And I listen, listen through my skin, through your skin, to your beating heart,
I listen for the thrum, the life inside, begging, dying to feel half the peace I know you do.

We merge, you welcome, exchange silent heartfelt hello's.
You see me bring my wounded heart here once again,
willing to crack, and feel, to open and yield,
ready to cry and scream and come undone,
or laugh with the coyotes at my twisted fate.

You were watching, Cottonwood, when I forgot you were, you heard my prayer
past midnight as I lay upstairs in my bed, naked and alone,
run through by the pain of a love I feared would never come.
At that moment, through open windows poured,
With the same sweet breeze that kissed your leaves as caressed my core--

--you breathed the promise of a love delivered.

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