

The Shapes of Leaves By Arthur Sze

Ginkgo, cottonwood, pin oak, sweet gum, tulip tree:

our emotions resemble leaves and alive

to their shapes we are nourished.

Have you felt the expanse and contours of grief

along the edges of a big Norway maple?

Have you winced at the orange flare

searing the curves of a curling dogwood?

I have seen from the air logged islands,

each with a network of branching gravel roads,

and felt a moment of pure anger, aspen gold.

I have seen sandhill cranes moving in an open field,

a single white whooping crane in the flock.

And I have traveled along the contours

of leaves that have no name. Here

where the air is wet and the light is cool,

I feel what others are thinking and do not speak,

I know pleasure in the veins of a sugar maple,

I am living at the edge of a new leaf.