Sycamore Fig

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Today’s path
   edged in santolina
   lined with worn terracotta fragments
sends dusty, conversational heat waves
   to the noonday sun
brings me to the old sycamore fig
   the patient bulk, uncompromising bark
   the soft exhalation of cool leaf breath
   settling from the dark reaches
   of branches and berry-speckled foliage
It is silent about Who might have passed
   or paused in its shade

I come close, hoping for an answer
   and because of What lies beyond
with the next step am incorporated into the living wood
My head enters the trunk where the grain sways to the right
   before continuing upward
I bend and conform
   to a record of growth in dense matter
   to an intrinsic logic
   shaped by circumstance, to be sure
   but not by choice

And doing so I understand that
   burning slowly in my chest
   are inner logics
   I should and can choose to express
Realization comes like a deep intake
   of tree-sweetened air