



the name of the willow

*The myriad connections that underlie the
tangible form of all things in the world*

At a place where the stream makes a long wide arc and the forest that surrounds it opens onto a meadow of wild grasses, the willow grows, a solitary figure on the riverbank. The tree has an unusual curve to its trunk and a lopsided pageboy cleanliness to the way its slender branches droop toward the ground. People say it is a willow, but over the months and years that I have spent visiting the tree, I have come to realize that, in fact, its name is not Willow as I first thought. No, things are not that simple.

To begin with, there is that strange bend to its trunk. The tree grows at the top of the bank about hip high above the river. It grows outward from the soil toward the river then curves skyward. What happened to cause that shape is that over the decades, each time the floodwaters rose and the river chewed away at the bank below the tree, the footing of the willow would