

## String Sounds

Everyone loves a story about an old violin.  
As if a violin has a spirit who has sung the same  
secrets to violinists of old times and new.  
As if wood and sound were alive and stronger  
than lifetimes.

I know nothing of my violin's first owner  
but in the year it was made  
Vivaldi, called *il Prete Rosso*, the Red Priest,  
was writing new music for orphan girls.  
I also know that most people in 1710  
never heard a violin and that  
George Washington would not be born  
for twenty-two years.

I know a little about my violin's maker.  
He hid from creditors for years.  
He could see the Torrazzo Tower and Clock  
four blocks from his workshop. His wife,  
Angela, died at twenty two  
leaving three small children.

I know that the dead from 18<sup>th</sup> century  
Cremona, Italy do speak today  
with some of the same tunes that lay under  
their fingertips on this very violin.

We have touched the same million spots.  
What else can explain the whisper  
I almost hear when I open its case?

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