

## Mangoes

1. A yellow mango is a sexual fruit.  
This I know, because like the body  
It gets stuck between things;  
The intimate texture demanding  
A physical trial, an interesting tango  
Of the teeth. I've tasted  
Its nectarous flesh and learned  
How to battle and how to cut down  
Because it is drudgery;  
It is the nicking down of abundance—  
Sweet heavenly fluid, filling  
Thirsty bodies with eternal things.
2. Peel its peel.
3. The tree of good and evil was similar to a mango tree—  
The dangling ornament with such an easy reach,  
Meeting our hands over a thorny, wire gate:  
  
Bite and you will hack ominous knowledge.  
Beautiful death. Biblical segregation.
4. I know two types of mangoes. Both born green.  
One turns yellow while the other evolves into a purple-red promise.  
One is brilliance; the other, a quiet palpitating heart.
5. Purple-red mangolas are chosen for your fruit baskets.  
Their texture, soft and cool like that of papayas—  
A peaceful treaty. A prayer to the intestines.  
A refreshment to the body's dark corners.
6. Purple-red mangoes are dry kisses.  
A lover wrapped in sheets turned the proper way.
7. Be careful, yellow mangoes stain.  
They have no modesty—  
Only a tangy aftermath smeared on faulty lips.
8. A produce in which the seed is bigger than the fruit—  
Our mangoes will carry us into another year,  
Preserving whatever is left of this forgotten Paradise.

## Summer I

*for my sister*

I remember the blossoming of Carmichael's *sea grape* tree  
Its promise of a sweet dull taste  
Flecks of sour bursting in our mouths  
Tire swings hanging from *Poinciana* branches  
Yellow *love vines* swatting clammy cheeks  
Laughing faces bobbing along until breaths ran out

I remember the advent of orange and green butterflies  
Large larvae bottled in clear jelly jars  
Worms inching around ridged glass rims  
Caterpillars vanishing overnight, leaving  
Soft knapsacks behind, cocoon ash heaps withering in the wind  
Giant monarchs fluttering with limp wings

I remember Bruno and Swifty, our two Saddle-bred horses  
A mare's hoof printed on my right foot  
Your left foot chasing down the ice-cream bus  
Fudge chocolate getting stuck between our indexes  
Fingers scissoring the sky, breaking free from each other  
The sheer blue, the padded clouds, the ferocious sun

I remember racing with the neighborhood boys  
Showing off muscles to prove we could be just as strong  
Building shacks made of scrap metal and splintered wood  
Hanging on rusted clothes-lines until hands were sore  
Rolling on the ground, crabgrass pricking our oily skin  
Hidden anthills, red and black soldiers following their ranks

I remember bellyaches from having too much fruit  
The sound of our mother's voice, her mellow singing  
To make the pain go away, a smooth whisper  
Evenings on the front porch, watching neighbors *sock* each other  
The purple and orange universe, God's hazy outstretched smile  
Father's voice calling when streetlights went off

I remember being tucked in, the feel of flannel sheets  
A kiss, farewell, goodnight – the wooden door closing  
Glow-in-the-dark stickers pinned on the blank ceiling  
A prayer of wishes under an artificial moon  
The semblance of ghosts lurking in the closet, the ominous solitude  
The flirtatious thought of escaping into our parents' bedroom  
The reality of them chasing us back into the dungeon-like blackness  
The cower, the drowsiness, and the unrelenting flutter of heavy eyelids...

*Then dreams and dreams of viscous light, a midsummer's day  
The giant steps a butterfly makes, its drunken body being swept by the sky.*