
Mumbai Mangoes

Namitha Rathinappillai

Abstract

In speaking about the gentle and measured experience of consuming a simple mango, the questions of how we might return to the roots of our ancestors through an act as basic as fulfilling our need for sustenance, and the myriad of possibilities for how we may intertwine joy, pleasure, play, and care into our daily lives, are posed. Ultimately, this poem aims to explore notions of what it means to engage in genuine and unadulterated mindfulness, outside of colonial constructs of space and time.

Keywords

food, mindfulness, ease, sun

These golden suns in the palms of our hands,
I hold this lesson before my lover,
as they grin with delight.
I prepare the meal.
I dig my fingers under its skin and it peels off clean,
and I smile with the delight that this feeling,
this sink and strip,
feels like home.
The sun never sets
when I hold it in my hand.
Its juices slipping through my fingers,
like rays of sunshine.
I hand my lover their naked fruit,
and teach them how to treasure it.
The only sound in the room is the soft landings of our teeth in this fruit,
for what greater prize is that first bite,
and the knowingness that the pit is soon to come?
I gesture to my lover as I see them reaching the seed's protector, the pit of the mango.
I teach by example,
sticky fingers swiping the dribbles down our lips,
how to make this moment go on like ellipses.
We later learn that to eat a mango while high is to make the high last longer--
to stretch out this moment like chewed bubble gum between fingers,
this experience seemingly going on forever.
I learn again and again that the mango is the fruit of winding down,
knowing that mangoes are older than the construction of time.
I want to paint my walls this golden hour fruit colour.
Rip down every clock and replace it with an oblong gamboge thing, instead.
Instead,
I sit in this moment,
full with the sun in my belly.

The discarded carcasses,
the only reminder that time has passed at all.

Author Biography

Namitha Rathinappillai (she/they) is a fat, disabled, queer, Tamil-Canadian spoken word artist, organizer, and workshop facilitator. Though currently based in Toronto, Namitha was the first female and youngest director of Ottawa's Urban Legends Poetry Collective (ULPC). Performing spoken word nationally, they are a two-time Canadian Festival of Spoken Word (CFSW) team member with ULPC and finalist at the Canadian Individual Poetry Slam (CIPS). They published their first chapbook titled 'Dirty Laundry' with Battleaxe Press in November of 2018. She holds a Masters in Sociology from York University and a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice, with a concentration in Sociology and a minor in English Language and Literature from Carleton University. You can find more at namitharathinappillai.com.