

On the Merits of a Gleaned Pomegranate

The summer that I finally came home,
we sat in your kitchen
and you taught me how
to eat a pomegranate.

You had collected three of them
from the women
who had collected all of them
from the cast-offs of
the market that now stood where
I only remembered an empty lot.

You bought them for nothing
from the women who,
you think,
spoke Portuguese as they
hailed box after box
of broken, ugly fruit from
the rusted bed of an
ancient pick-up truck.

You told me that you cannot
peel a pomegranate,
or let your blade have a
dalliance with the thick, ruby hide.

You must cleave it straight through,
you showed me,
and scoop out the gleaming pulp
like the gore of an open wound.

So, I listened,
my leg wrapped

to the chair's leg,
and I cursed the river,
and the promises
made in serpentine words
that have kept me away
for so damned long.