

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.