

Red Plum

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I keep your center in my mouth,
dark red as the inside of a closed eye,
swishing you around as if I was beating you to death,
and with your body already consumed, skin and the meat
of your existence juiced on my chin and cheeks,
just as my kind have done in many preceding summers,
younger summers, to both you and your bruised sisters.

We drove into the sun-burned and bilingual mother-city
of Charleston, South Carolina, you and me and my piano teacher
tapping his long arpeggio-fingers against the wheel
of the rental car to Chopin's Etudes. He was such
a bad driver. I watched him swerve and decrease
our chances of survival numerous times from the cool
distance of the air-conditioning.

At dawn he pulls over to buy some fresh fruit,
and I watch him, barely awake, thinking how
this is some foreign world of ways: the car idling,
the fog standing around doing nothing specific,
the gypsies tying their dogs to the tent posts in the heat,
him lifting one red plum after another from the baskets
and placing them in his own, building a house to devour,
his hands that could stretch fourteen keys across the board
delicately lifting the newly plucked siblings to examine.