

Watermelon Seeds

Each creak of our rocking chairs punctuates the air,
and seeds fly from our spitting puckered lips.
Sugar saturated liquid slides down our arms
as my little sis and I gnaw and savor
the succulent red flesh of a summer melon.
Juices stain our lips like a poor madam's rogue.

From a lightsome July long gone,
I do recall my cousin once proclaiming
“Don't ever swallow the seeds, runt,
or a melon will grow round in your gut!”
The pleasure of five-year-old me
turned sour like milk stuck behind leftovers
with the fresh horror of becoming
a watermelon incubator, and of grandpa
rapping his knuckles on my swollen tummy.
Thump Thump “Yep she's a ripe one” he'd say.

Sis's eyes roll in delight as she leans back,
one hand holding a waning red moon.
I can see her tongue roll in her cheek;
her other hand now hesitantly stroking
her own heavily burdened globe,

I take another bite and in the midst
of this saccharine morsel a tiny tear –
black and threatening – sticks inside my cheek,
and my sister's hand rubs her swollen months,
that incubates, incubates melons
that when ripe will be harvested red-faced
and shrieking. The Doc, he'll rap her tummy

and say right proudly, “Yep she's a ripe one.”

My rocking chair creaks, Sis takes another
bite, and a tiny tear – black and threatening –
I spit over the front porch railing.