

## **Beginning**

The air smells of earth, of clay  
like my mother's hands and, I imagine,  
like those of my grandfather-  
worn with gray mud,  
traces of oil based creations:  
of life.

## Thanksgiving

a mass migration of near adults carrying lovingly wrapped packages of leftovers  
from meals made by so many caring hands.

we crowd onto trains bound back to the city

still full, still smiling.

the bathroom on metro north reminds me of when K and I used to steal toilet paper in the days  
of being dirt poor and I wonder if those days are going to be my future as I wash my hands.

like this train I'm barreling forward in the dark under a full moon but I don't feel the guidance of  
the tracks beneath me.

I've been dreaming of bugs, of being eaten and I wake up scratching myself raw and I know that  
this is just change but my skin doesn't know the difference.

and I've been dreaming of him and what might have been even though I know in my bones he  
wasn't my path

for once there is no man in this future

just me and my leftovers en route to New York and after that who knows

soon they'll be consumed and I'll be alone again, scratching out my path under the moon.

## **Bitter melon**

I've acquired this taste  
it's taken years of practice to be this nuanced  
do you like the way I make you pucker?

were you surprised to open me up and find me filled with things more inedible than otherwise?

I'd say I'm sorry but I'm not

it must be nice, to be some other fruit  
something as simple as a strawberry

they offered to make me a coconut  
a pineapple perhaps  
I tried the spikes on for size  
built a shell  
made you work for it  
"the payoff is inside," my thorny crown whispered  
I much prefer the bite I've earned

## **japanese plums**

the plums, you write,  
are in season now.  
yellow globes littering the walk,  
dangling from branches-  
reminding you of us.

this is the first I've heard from you  
in months.  
your silence haunted january,  
all of february into march,  
somehow fruit makes this acceptable.

you allowed yourself to see us:  
tangled hair, smudged faces-  
before we became definable-  
scrambling up the trees,  
smiles sticky from plums.

all the effort exerted  
for the sweet flesh.  
they yield only enough for a taste.  
sinking our teeth in, we quickly discover  
the smooth seed,  
find there is no more here,  
it must be discarded,  
but there is never a shortage of plums.

without us there to pick them,  
they will fall,  
rot on the lawn,  
frustrate you to no end.  
but you don't say that in so many words.

## **The End**

your toothbrush is holding mine  
in an armless embrace  
the mechanics and remainders  
of a kiss