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## Blackberries

Beth Turner Ayers

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## Blackberries

I pass by every day  
The briar patch beckons me  
As the warming air  
Beckons the blossom  
White flowers  
Imprisoned by tangled vine  
Thorned, twisted confinement  
Protection for the seed  
Blossom gives way  
To a small knotty sphere  
Red, on a jagged platter of green  
Drawing from earth's bounty  
Preparing the bounty of earth  
The berry  
Plump, reflective, black  
Fruit of the tangled vine

My six-year-old hand  
Reaches from my mind  
To carefully pluck the treasure  
And yet  
My view comes through glass  
My leather seat imprisons me  
In today's reality  
My mouth waters for Mama's jam

*Beth Turner Ayers*

## *The Tangerine*

In the purpling gray of early morning  
you photograph me bent over  
my essays and coffee –  
and frame the scene to give me later.  
You sit across from me,  
a pale shard of daylight  
on your cheerful palate of fruit.  
  
For days and days you have loved me  
in my uneasy bittersweet. But this morning,  
when you lift a piece of half-mooned tangerine  
to my mouth and place it  
between my lips, the clean scent  
on your fingers wraps  
around the citrus and seals my hope.

*Dallie Clark*