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The Tangerine

Dallie Clark

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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