

## Jujubes

My father strikes a jujube tree and  
the sundried fruit balter  
into a bedsheet I hold below. How strange,  
to beat a living thing for its dying fruit. To  
wrest from it – with violence – what it already  
abandoned nurturing.

It is my grandmother's final autumn. Here,  
in her garden, our years apart  
are a lacuna we ignore, nubivagant  
like the sheer October dust.

Before leaving, I embark my suitcase  
with hundreds of jujubes, each  
a drupe I caught as it whizzed past me  
under the mustard sun. When I am finally  
home, a continent away, fruit  
the colour of deep blood  
pours from each palm until my hands  
are coated in their dust.

I want to believe distance  
is a runny thing, a thin covering dripping  
away with each visit or each fruit  
from your grandmother's yard. But  
I have come to learn that distance  
is a thick stain you wrestle with,  
and you, the thing  
you beat.