

Mango Eating in America

The best way to eat a mango,
my father-in law once told me,
is in the shower, how juices

run down your chin
and neck, when the seed slips
out of your hands like soap,

and you bite down on the soft
meat of a delicious, ripe mango,
and I remember the times I went

into the mango orchards of a distant
neighborhood, climbed the trees,
shook a branch or two, knocked

down an armful of mangos, then sat
to eat them on the stairs of a house
previously owned by a doctor

who'd left his country, and there
in the quiet, between the chirps
of birds and the warm, sticky breeze,

I ate the mangos, bit into them
with a hunger for sweetness,
wondered about a god who created

such a delicious tropical fruit,
so perfect, and the trees loomed
around me like these giants,

friends offering up their gifts;
it's been years now since I've eaten
a real Cuban mango, but the memory

comes back not only in dreams,
but in Miami when the street vendors
lift their bags of three mangos

for a dollar, and I am so tempted,
but decline the offer because I know
that, like my father who never ate imported

mangos again in his life, I will one day soon.