

Dream Translation

by Donnalyn Xu

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the speaker of my poems manufactures joy
with radiance organic feelings
bubbling over, the way verb pumiced into metaphor
is a relational spill dissolved into sweetness

the speaker always holds the mandarin
in the hollow cusp of her palm before she eats—this, too is a sweetness
that lives on the skin an effervescent bodily practice
she is helplessly devoted
to; she pledges allegiance
to all tender fruits anything
that wilts & propagates syrup
blooming endlessly
 like most desires

the first time she eats an orange in the shower
she lets the juice run down her chin
 & licks the angular slope
of her wrist, enamoured with
the sticky hairs on her forearm tasting salt brine & zest & forgiveness

rain petals on valencia flesh honeyed nectar fragrance
 simmering everywhere a bloodrush pink
pried open without rot the heavy scent of orange peel
 in the steaming air is the only memory
that stays in the poem she unsalts

every wound she ever inflicted
on her body like a child who recoils from
violence, she wants to know
what hands are capable of she ornaments naked-
ness, dresses herself clean again says, trust me, it's more romantic
to segment affection & bite into it

isn't every ode to beauty an elegy first
 & what else can this body digest if not emptiness

i won't pretend i want to be unsayable—i want to ripen

a language made easy to swallow
peel the bitter rind with my fingers
in the shower in the dream in the city of adornment
wash, open & exhume
 a fizzled heart beneath a weeping faucet
not the sweetness that i crave, but the hunger ●

Donnalyn Xu (22) is a poet and writer from Sydney. She studies art and writes about strangely ordinary feelings. ↑

'Condensed Pots' is by **Kitman Yeung** (21), who temporarily thinks of herself as a child in a grandma's body. Kitman experiments with nostalgic sensitivities through mediums of photography, illustrations, and animation. →