



1.

In London, the seat of empire
 (underwear showing through now)
 I eat mangoes, sliced
 see the cayenne
 sprinkled, machine-gunned through raw
 honey-coloured
 flesh.

Then I ride my lover high
 and marvel at my fortune:
 this projection screen of back
 so white and vacant, so long, capable
 of holding so many of my moments.

Saturated, I arch
 onto waxy shine of bum
 shot through with pimples, teeth-marks
 that remember a mango-splintered smile.
 Smiling bits of yellow applause.

2.

I need a new name.
 I'll take back my second
 or maybe just speed it up past my first
 or maybe call myself something else
 that will make people angry:
 Shabani or Giles, or Mango Boy

I'll grow over-ripe mango messy-lazy
 offend like an unremovable stain
 mango legacy, mango regret

Live up to this reputation
 peel for free
 make propositions, lie:
 like try me in the water, so sensuous...
 and tidy

or
 squeeze the mango boy and watch
 it all comes out then
 then think of a name then
 then tell me

3.

Maple syrup on mango
works, you are
a Canadian child
 I'm told

and so
 I dunk it all in yogurt
 pour cardamum
 and pistachio
 (yes, some mint)
 whip it in
 defiant.

One clove.
 Cinnamon.



The Heat Yesterday

Ian Iqbal Rashid

The heat yesterday gets a hold of my head,
 becomes an absent presence: the memory of a
 crown. Heat aggravates everything, bullies you
 into a little less alive. The inverse of an
 echo, the man you are about to become. Heat
 peels back the wild, gamey smell of boy, which
 is always there, waiting like curtains.

Heat erodes the gravelly bits that complicate
 your voice, that confuses the air—a constant
 static sound. Sound that has scored the last
 angry days with you, our horrible misstepped
 dance out of synch: every expression a glare,
 every touch a threat. And my two hands always
 struggling, working a pocket-sized game.
 Nothing I could do was right: the tiny silver
 balls never never in their nooks all at once in
 the heat yesterday.

In the heat yesterday I leave you impoverished,
 embarrassed feeling foolish, misspent. (As time
 goes into one of its own long toffee like
 stretches.) I am amazed that I can leave, as if
 this was an early emergence from an afternoon
 film. To turn the corner chased by so much
 runny yellow noise. So much that had been
 allowed to go on and on now on for so long now
 without me.

The heat yesterday slices through today like
 cellophane. Today is an unused shellacked
 smell. And I am back again still. Still touch
 the complicated bones of knee that peek out
 from under a sheet. "The heat yesterday..." You
 can not hear me. A love song seeps out from the
 headphones that cup your innermost face....