

Pomegranate

Do you remember the time of your flower—
your sharp crown fleshy and tubular,
enclosing a bud?

You seem complete now.
Outwardly a little stiff, yes, but regally beautiful,
scarlet skin underlaid with yellow.

Yet beneath your leathery surface,
your pithy membrane is waning,
less pliable and porous.

Inside your thinning compartments,
those many plump sacs—sweet and tart—
have swollen to their limits.

A mother who walks through this alley,
edged by overgrown yards and falling fences,
will be happy to find you.

With a hard pressure from her thumbs
a sharp pulling apart, she will halve you,
offering your ruby gems to her young boy.

One by one, he will pick them out,
crunch each tiny white center,
stain his lips and chin with crimson.

The mother, from her share,
will lower her head and spit the seeds,
aim for a patch of summer-hardened soil,
and bank on rain to soak it.

—Theresa McCourt