

on chinese medicine

my mama
she gave me life
marked every fruit as hot or cold
for fever, melon
green meat severed from netted rind
for lethargy, mango
sweet juice between my fingers,
balancing yin and yang.

in the hum of the labor unit i hold a papaya to practice an endometrial biopsy
i take the thin tool,
scraping pink meat from flesh,
black beaded seeds spilling out this proxy for a womb.
meanwhile novocain is injected between thighs
meanwhile bellies swell like spring fruit
while i try to remember if the papaya is hot or cold.