Satsuma - 3rd Place

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Satsuma

my grandfather cannot talk about his childhood without crying
but sometimes he tries
when he does, I hold my breath
as though my exhale might remind him to stop

my grandmother sits beside us and peels another satsuma
I have never heard her talk about the Korean war
her calloused hands with sensible fingernails break open the orange skin
she hears my grandfather's voice catch, and her voice tastes of rind

enough.

I won't taste these bitters with reverence or regret, she says
spits out the seeds, one by one

she never calls it trauma,
doesn't call it anything at all

instead, she hands me a satsuma
my grandfather turns on the nine o'clock news

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