Courtney: On Seeing My Ex-Wife at the Farmers' Market

ON SEEING MY EX-WIFE AT THE FARMERS' MARKET

BRANDON COURTNEY

Bent over wooden crates, your hands dipped into a season

of Arkansas Blacks, Autumn Golds, you finger the bruises

where the pulp has gone mealy, press where its flesh

hurts the most. You've never touched me like the apples

you're holding now, never lifted any part of me to your nose, your lips,

and inhaled as wholly, deeply, as you do with the Asian pears; the white onions' tunics look like your wedding gown's tattered neckline. Darling, the red bell

pepper you're palming looks like the ghost of a heart. I made a room,

once, in those very hands. In the end, don't we learn by touching

the skin, don't most things breathe

through the smallest of openings? Everything you taught

me about leaving

tells me to distrust

the sudden stillness

of the soft-edged pomegranate and its hundred hearts within.

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