

Cusp Harvest

A pot of sour yellow plums simmers on the great gas stove. It is August and the city hangs like a moss cloak, damp voices in a petri dish, little dog sick with heat. I stir the sugar as the tram roils along Kazlova Street, my wild nettle body shifting in its abundant skin. I wasn't always thin stemmed, but these days, I can't refuse children. It's how I ended up cooking five kilos of fruit in this sauna kitchen, mashing the pulp, straining each shiny skull from the juice. I am a bad guest in a lost country. I don't presume to be wanted, sneaking into old buildings to touch doorknobs, photographing trash chutes. I leave cigarettes on benches and imagine my dead having a smoke. Motherland with no mother: only the phone bears a familiar timbre. In this long twilight of return, I cut the flame, let the tart compote cool.