

Ravi Teja Yelamanchili

Seedless Guavas

I.

“But from fire, wind, and sun [Brahman] drew forth the threefold eternal Veda, called Rik, Yajus, and Saman.”

(Manusmriti I.XXIII)

I saw the gods of my ancestors turned to artifacts,
chipped faces, broken arms—stolen by *Hamatreyan*

flea winged Earth nymphs: Bulkeley, Lee, Hunt,
Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, and Flint still call all this their

creation. Mountains drowned by today’s teachers
of ancient art. Dying languages forgotten and

thrown away. Under the dim light of a parking garage,
a Snickers wrapper looks like a sparrow preening its feathers.

II.

Coming of age novels are always about a country
that had already come of age, ideals, identities, and

a kid finding his place. *In-country*, in two different countries—
the sunset was so red I thought I was being pulled over.

*“In the middle of the cave of the skull between the four
doors shines Āṭmā, like the sun in the sky.”*

(Dhyanabindu Upanishad of Samaveda)

We stop by the roadside. Roll down our windows.

III.

Buy roasted peanuts from a girl with jade stained eyes.
Her skin is as dark as mine.

She makes a cone
out of yesterday’s paper.

“...she hath hid the darkness,

*this Dawn hath wakened there with new-born lustre.
Youthful and unrestrained she cometh forward:
she hath turned thoughts to Sun and fire and worship.”
(Rig Veda VII.LXXX)*

On the paper, I see pictures of fruit.
When I first came back to America, I wouldn't eat pears

until I was told they were seedless guavas.
Alas! The Romans traded gods like baseball cards.

A bad harvest meant a beating for *Pan*.
What about *Faunus*?

Ravi Teja Yelamanchili is currently working at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education as a Business Analyst. His writing has previously been published in the *Somerville Times*, *Sahitya Akademi's Indian Literature*, *Muse India*, and several other journals. He also won the Boston Mayor's Poetry Program Contest, and the University of Pittsburgh Undergraduate Poetry Contest.