

ADRIANNE KALFOPOULOU

Cherries

Pits and all, we eat the cherries
as if these fat-skinned jewels came
straight from God, as if
no other berry matched this
sun-filled sweetness.
Our tongues dark
with the swallowed juice of it,
the fruit skins peeled
against our teeth when
she wants to know,
between the greedy eating,
what happens when you love,
when you really love a man
and have a child and five
years later want divorce?
Maybe that means, I think and say aloud,
the love wasn't enough.
Her fingers play the stems, pluck
two dark purple pairs,
eating them quickly, she says
so you need to know, and
looks for the sweetest ones,
the ripest gem-like colors, impatient
with the pits, swallowing them too,
summer's sweetest crop.
You never know, I assure her.

She murmurs, smacks her purpled lips,
quickly spits one out,
unripe and sour, rushes
to wash out her mouth. Sometimes
the fruit looks sweet beyond belief,
there are so many you just can't
get enough. We are leaning
against the kitchen counter top,
the cherries between us
in their bowl, the citronella candles
lit against June mosquito bites.