From Blossoms
By Li-Young Lee
1986

Li-Young Lee is an American poet who was born in Indonesia to Chinese parents. His family eventually settled in the United States after fleeing anti-Chinese attitudes. In this poem, the speaker describes the experience of biting into a peach. As you read, take note of how the speaker describes peaches and the experience of eating one.

[1] From blossoms comes this brown paper bag of peaches we bought from the boy at the bend in the road where we turned toward signs painted Peaches.

From laden\(^1\) boughs,\(^2\) from hands, from sweet fellowship\(^3\) in the bins, comes nectar at the roadside, succulent\(^4\) peaches we devour, dusty skin and all, comes the familiar dust of summer, dust we eat.

O, to take what we love inside, to carry within us an orchard, to eat not only the skin, but the shade, not only the sugar, but the days, to hold the fruit in our hands, adore it, then bite into the round jubilance\(^5\) of peach.

There are days we live as if death were nowhere in the background; from joy to joy to joy to impossible blossom, to sweet impossible blossom.


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1. loaded with something heavy, carrying a lot of weight
2. a main branch of a tree
3. Fellowship (noun): the company of equals or friends
4. Succulent (adjective): juicy flavor, full of juice
5. great joy, triumph, or satisfaction
Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following best identifies the theme of the poem?
   A. People can find boundless joy in unexpectedly simple moments.
   B. People should appreciate every moment because some opportunities may never come again.
   C. Living in the moment can help drive away fears of the future.
   D. Even the simplest actions can be meaningful with friends and family.

2. PART B: Which quote from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?
   A. “From blossoms comes / this brown paper bag of peaches / we bought from the boy” (Lines 1-3)
   B. “From laden boughs, from hands, / from sweet fellowship in the bins, / comes nectar at the roadside” (Lines 6-8)
   C. “peaches we devour, dusty skin and all, / comes the familiar dust of summer, dust we eat.” (Lines 9-10)
   D. “to hold / the fruit in our hands, adore it, then bite into / the round jubilance of peach.” (Lines 14-16)

3. PART A: What do peaches represent for the speaker?
   A. a way to remember those who are gone
   B. gratitude for all life
   C. time together with family
   D. the unavoidability of death

4. PART B: Which quote from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
   A. “peaches / we bought from the boy / at the bend in the road where we turned toward / signs painted Peaches” (Lines 2-5)
   B. “From laden boughs, from hands, / from sweet fellowship in the bins, / comes nectar at the roadside” (Lines 6-8)
   C. “O, to take what we love inside, / to carry within us an orchard” (Lines 11-12)
   D. “There are days we live / as if death were nowhere” (Lines 17-18)
5. How does the final stanza contribute to the development of the poem's theme?
Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. In your opinion, are the moments of happiness that the speaker finds by chance or does he seek them out? Are we in control of deciding which moments bring us happiness?

2. In your opinion, how do simple things provide powerful experiences? Is this something that only nature is capable of doing?

3. In the context of the poem, what is good and how do we know it? How do we know if something is beautiful or good? Why does the speaker think the peaches are good? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.

4. In the context of the poem, who is in control: man or nature? Is the speaker responsible for the beautiful experience he describes or is nature? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.