

## The Mentor of Memories

A message purred inside the mango. I felt it on my tongue, delivered through fibrous strings. I could taste it, an echo dancing in my ear as I walked in the park in Burkina Faso. I bit again and sucked on the flesh laying over my tongue. There would be thunder. A tree close to the house flashed. I went from seeing the tree in my mind to seeing in front of me the woman mixing rice. Then the smell of soumbala in the rice from the side of the path made me draw back. That strong putrid smell like leaves left in a water barrel for weeks. The smell shook me. I dropped the mango and split from the Parc Urbain Bangr Weogo to meet my destiny.

The erotic rung stronger than my karate mentor's chops that day. Something was coming to me. I could feel it about to arrive. I was alone in the house in the afternoon when the fruit vendor rang my bell. As I opened the gate, she took down the basket from her head filled with yellow mangoes. Mangoes from Bobo-Dioulasso. The basket hummed like there were bees inside each mango. I took the whole lot, bringing the pulsating inside my house.

As I closed the gate it was then that the thunder clapped and lightening streaked the sky. Ions charged the air. Vibrations came from the basket. I jumped. Soon I was in the house and out of the rain. There was something different in my house now. I couldn't see anything, but I could feel it, like an expansion in the air. Like air parting and something rising up from the rift. Something demanded me to take my shirt off. Like it wanted to touch me, wanted my skin. I sat on the couch and just listened, holding the mangoes in my

hands, smelling the sweetness rising. I pressed into an oozing part of one, felt the sap sink into my flesh. A taste of childhood on my tongue suddenly. Sweet. Thick.

The feeling of steam. An image. Metal sap pales filled with tapped water from the Maple trees. The pale half my height. I am five again. Old hands reaching down by my side, hoisting the pale up to the stove into the evaporator. Steam all around. The sweet smell. The cold outside. The wet snow. A tug on my sweater, --oh that powder blue sweater knit by Oma! I turn my head. Next to me, at my own two pale high height, black ringlets, red cheeks, and blue eyes. She's there again before me. My heart is young again, there's a big green field unfolding in it. I can run. There's a bedsheet being shaken, floating up and up before it will be folded. I am again next to her. I stare into her eyes. "We are cherubs" I whisper from here to there. She giggles. The mangoes' vibrations rise.