

Last Summer Was a Mango

By: Helen Kao

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Sweet California comfort
rippled through me as I clung to my best friend
on her graduation day. We went for

strawberry soft serve,
like high school Saturdays.

I drove until the starlit highway melted into
sun-soaked Taipei tarmac. I stepped
off a 17-hour redeye to sauna air on my skin.

A week later I found myself
weaving through zinnias in Singapore
with my father
at the bayside garden. We
talked endlessly about nothing.
The lilies and orchids listened in on
our whispers as we watched
blue dusk descend too early
on us and a

tart, unripened July.
My grandmother waved at the closing door.
It was no use —

she'd forget me in two days' time.

Back home now, my homemade vinaigrette
would never compare to my mother's,

so I cried because I'd run

out of time
before I'd ever perfect her recipe.

I scraped mango skins into the trash
and pulled my suitcase with me through the door.

Now, in relentless winter,
I try to cling to that mango taste of summer —
faint and tart with cruelly fading sweetness
so I'll savor every last sugared moment
until mango season returns.



Helen is a junior at Steinhardt studying flute performance, entertainment business, and creative writing. Her best work always revolves around the passage of time, all types of love, and fruit. She hopes this piece on winter retrospect still rings the same now in spring.

Ann is a junior studying Interactive Media Arts at NYU. She loves reading, listening to music, and taking long walks along the streets to Trader Joe's.