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The Sway

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—Mary Trin

The peach trees used to sway
to the voice that whispered in an ancient language.
They would quietly listen to the strange twists
and turns
trying to decipher
what was being said.
But the sway of the peach trees
was too stiff, too unyielding.
They never took the time to learn every twist or turn,
nor ventured into the dark corners
from where the voice whispered.

My mother's voice,
a soft sigh of a foreign tongue
knocked on my door begging to be let in.
But I was like a peach tree
swaying with the music of my mother's language

without trying to decipher what was being said.
I never took the time to learn
every twist or turn
of my mother's ancient language.

All I know has come from the sway
of a growing peach tree

that gave my mother shade
and is now protecting me
from the dark corners
where the voices of my sisters,
my mother and those before me
have cried their lives away
beneath the sway of the peach trees.

It accompanies me,
the sway of this peach tree,
as I now try to decipher
to mimic the whisper.
But my voice is coarse

too loud, too stiff,
like a tiny puddle trying to take the place of a river.

My children and those who follow
will never hear the strange whisper,
the soft sigh of my mother's foreign tongue,
as they sit under the sway of the peach trees.

The Sway