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## Winter Raspberries

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### Winter Raspberries

You love most things ordinary,  
in season, but you cull these  
out in the corners of Kroger  
from the other dull January harvest;

when the summer-ripe bushes are bare,  
you bring them in hulled, half-handfuls,  
serve them in your mother's cut crystal  
dishes and with clotted cream and sugar

you make them taste sweeter to  
our tongues than in the season  
they are brought in big ripe  
bushels from the backyard,

plenty for pies and still  
leftovers enough to get  
the bees giddy with drink. But what  
we remember best is how winter's

snow banks welcome red. Once,  
sledding down the hill, your son  
my brother broke open his nose.  
When blood spilled to snow in

crimson clots you buried the wound in  
the elemental abundance – a cool whiteness,  
a poultice as present as the skin of your palm –  
your palm as quick, as poised as

if for spooning heaps of sugar to  
the season's sour berries – that growth  
you seek – digging through the chill of weak  
winter produce, the pale vegetables, vigilant for

the dark bruise they make, like you watch  
the mole, risen on creamy drift of clavicle, grow  
rutilant, a cancer you cannot afford to cut out  
until you make sure our bones are set, sure

we are sustained and then some,  
that the cut crystal is clean enough  
to be held to the light and send out its  
inherited prisms. You prefer we have

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the small, immediate pleasures of  
sight: the contrast of red and of  
white, of taste over anything  
longer, more lasting, for yourself.

And like now we cannot remember the  
womb-fruit you passed us, once, through  
the placenta, or the after-months of  
sweet milk secretions, our

oblivion does not allow us to know  
this food as blessing. Nor that  
we owe any thanks. Nor that  
we should expect something less.

*Jennifer Luebbers, '09*