

# Pleasures

By Denise Levertov

I like to find  
what's not found  
at once, but lies

within something of another nature,  
in repose, distinct.  
Gull feathers of glass, hidden

in white pulp: the bones of squid  
which I pull out and lay  
blade by blade on the draining board—

tapered as if for swiftness, to pierce  
the heart, but fragile, substance  
belying design.            Or a fruit, *mamey*,

cased in rough brown peel, the flesh  
rose-amber, and the seed:  
the seed a stone of wood, carved and

polished, walnut-colored, formed  
like a brazilnut, but large,  
large enough to fill  
the hungry palm of a hand.

I like the juicy stem of grass that grows  
within the coarser leaf folded round,  
and the butteryellow glow  
in the narrow flute from which the morning-glory  
opens blue and cool on a hot morning.

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Although born in England, Denise Levertov's long residence in the United States and her allegiance to the nativist vision and organic, open-form procedures of William Carlos Williams make her a distinctly American writer. Levertov came here in 1948, and was soon associating with the Black Mountain poets Robert Duncan and Robert Creeley. Her quietly passionate poems, attuned to mystic insights and mapping quests for harmony, became darker and more political in the 1960s as a result of personal loss and her outrage at the Vietnam War.