

Under the Lemon Tree

By Marsha De La O

Not rain, but fine mist
falls from my lemon tree,
a balm of droplets in green shadow.

Six years now my mother gone to earth.
This dew, light as footsteps of the dead.
She often walked out here, craned her neck,
considered the fruit, hundreds of globes
in their leathery hides, figuring on
custard and pudding, meringue and
hollandaise.

But her plans didn't work out.

The tree goes on unceasingly—lemons fall
and fold into earth and begin again—
me, I come here as a salve against heat,
come to languish, to let the soft bursts—
essence of citrus, summer's distillate—
drift into my face and settle. Water and gold
brew in the quiet deeps at the far end
of the season. Leaves swallow the body
of light and the breath of water brims over.

My hands cup each other the way hers did.

Marsha de la O, "Under the Lemon Tree" from *Antidote For Night*. Copyright © 2015 by
Marsha de la O. Reprinted by permission of BOA Editions, Ltd. .
Source: Antidote for Night (BOA Editions Ltd., 2015)