

primera mañana

*honoring Great Mother and the ancestors  
who created the White Shaman Mural  
of the Seminole Canyon  
photographed by Ansen Seale  
by Natalia Treviño*

berry and loose  
skin                slips  
too ripe

blotches my finger  
purples teeth  
an accidental        color

accent     on fingertips  
when squeezed  
sudden        smudge-streak

like            sky  
a pulse of patterns  
who carry            purple

breath            song before dawn  
too ripe and beaming  
a wet                eye in the bush

overcooked by the riverside  
sunoven            taste  
and it marks lips

so sweet            sickly  
decay stains            stay  
on my hands            long

after arroyo rinses        old bloods  
from carving        good small  
cuts                thin meatlayers

and skins            for drying  
sewing                wearing  
piles of skins            lives I carry

on my back for my daughter  
for wrapping            for softness  
                         in her twigbasket

as we walk            and hold  
one another    like stones do--  
will be cold soon

reddish berries   brown  
the flesh            under  
our fingernails    days years

later    ages    a warm memory  
below the heft of skinoil,  
below sweat            below my long

story                    with time  
piled fruitmush    browns  
the weave            the wound

bases of our baskets    this one  
a wet darkwood            color  
yours                    new hue of sundried grass

the berrypaint  
says                    *we have*  
*been* here            tell

a story about food            and tart  
smell of danger            burnt  
taste                    of discoverystory

first  
          sunrise--  
          familyheart--

bigger now than when I was  
only                    a daughter  
sadder                    the more familyheart

grows—dies berrypaints too      spikesplat  
the ground with their      own  
familystory

*We were flowers      once taken*  
*nectaring before we grew      new skin lips*  
*purples reds      yellows like flyfeathers*

*only thin petals*

*alive to      fall*  
*fade      or freeze?*  
*solely to become animalfeed--*

*let us help you tell they say*  
*let us help touch*  
*the other      worlds*

*we explode and explode*  
*and      our juicedecay stands*  
*the great      test*

time and time again  
berrystains turn my fingers  
into mouths      who speak

without words      on the rockwall  
transfer spirit's firstsunrise      to your  
homebaskets

long after the fall and the freeze  
of my      one  
fruitbody

long after the      sure      fade  
of my      leaflike  
wrinkled  
and loosening

skin.