

Bruised Fruit

by Maria Pascualy

mangoes sell three for a dollar
at the rotten fruit stand near
the secondhand store
the Cambodian lady slowly makes the right change
shoves the mangoes in a crumpled
plastic sack & turns her back
to rearrange a pile of spotted bananas

the guy at the bookstore across
the street gives me a sad smile
then clicks the lock tight as I tug
at the door
he pulls the shade & points at a hand-made
sign taped to the windowpane
it reads CLOSED FOR LUNCH

inside his cat scratches at the screen
meows and asks to be let out
there's a gigantic dandelion stuck in the dry soil
between the street and the store
it's about two feet tall
I pluck off its head count my change
again and take the early bus home