



ORANGE THAT DOTS THE I
RACHEL SCHENBERG

PEARS BOOKS

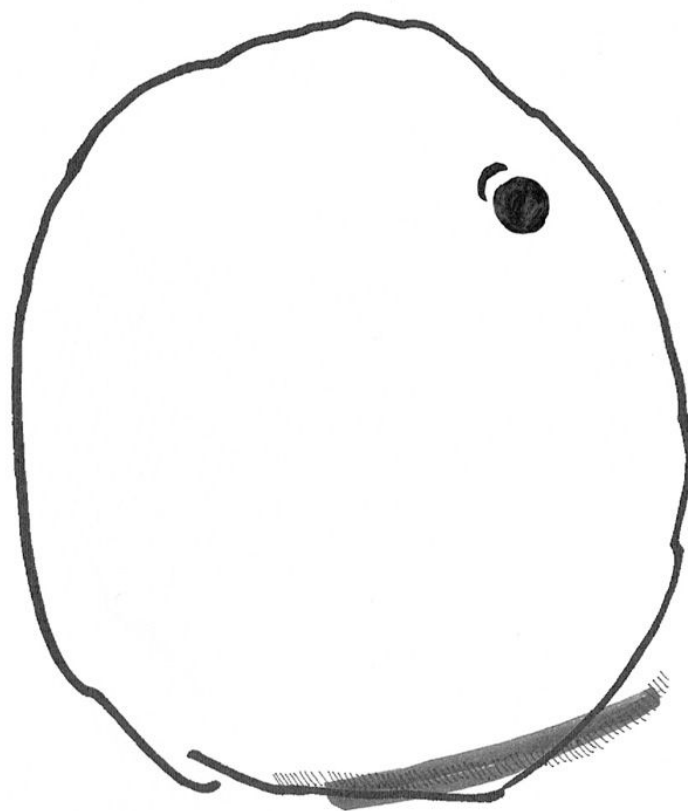
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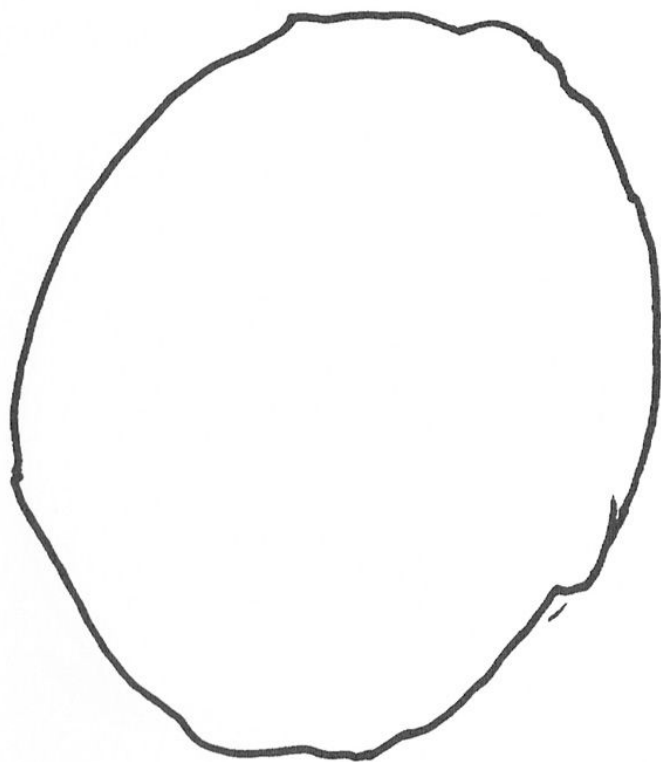
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ORANGE THAT DOTS THE I





i'm walking in downstairs to the supermarket,
this abyss,
discreet from the above levels of make-up,
ware that's hard and kitchen-like, all
breeds of shampoo.

we're in the chest of capital Capital
capital M capital P we are the one price
Monoprix.

i'm looking for pepper, but lemons could do
fine.

i'm near, in the fruit. an older woman stretches
over me, my basket below: she's reaching for
oranges, her elbow in my navel.

she seems steady unsteady in the gain, so i pause the
citrus-search, wait for her footing to rebalance. you see
there's one there in her hand the orange in the palm – her
weighing pan, that reference mass,
while her left hand takes to the stalls.

she's buoyant for a second.

i cut you off she says to me, and *thank you*, as an end, and i
remember her nails still digging into the porous balls, they
lingered over her cart.

all filled with fire, she trolleys off, and her first phrase like low
hanging fruit suspended in the air.

i start
to think
about what gets
cut off?

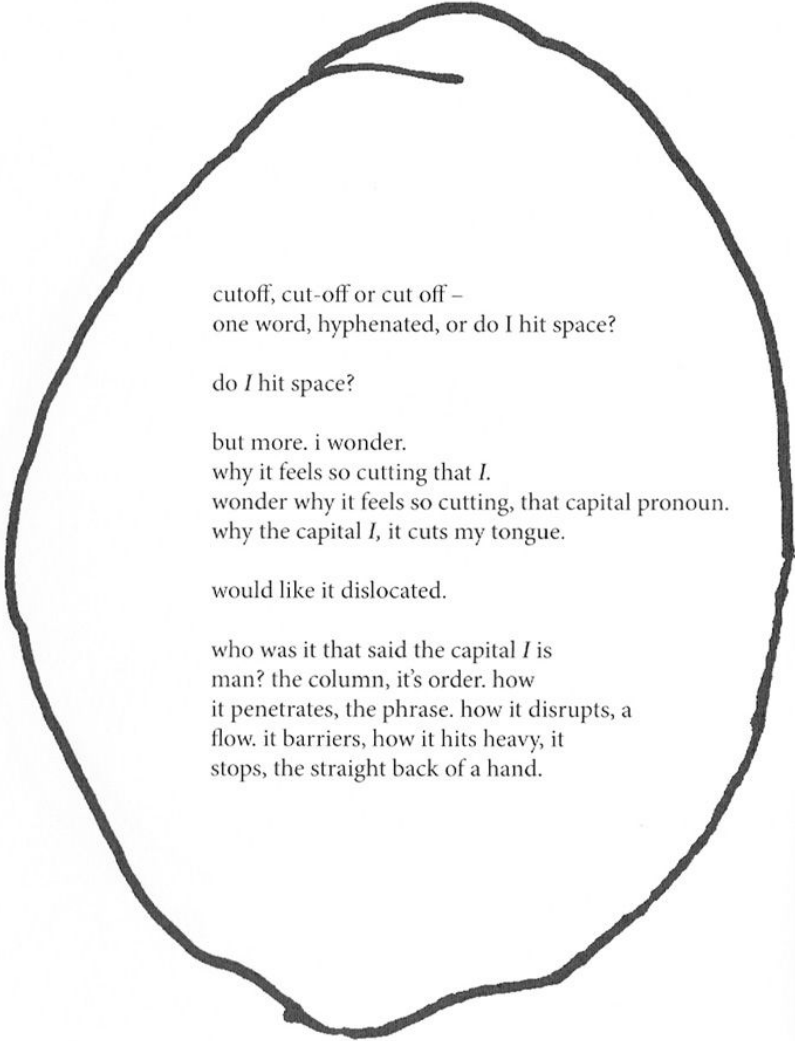
cut-off jeans, cut-off dates.
cut-off time, lists and shirts.
cut off, louisiana.
cut off. your hands.

cut off one head and two more shall take its place.
cut him off, speeding.
cut-off shorts.

cold cuts, electrical cuts,
oh-shit-hi-hello-again-dunno-what-happened
the line suddenly got cut off.

eastern cut-off, meek's cutoff.
cut-off value, cut-off point.
turn the cutoffs into a bag!
cut off your nose to spite your face.

heads cut off, o' gays, jews and witches.
circumcision.
there's always something in a list.



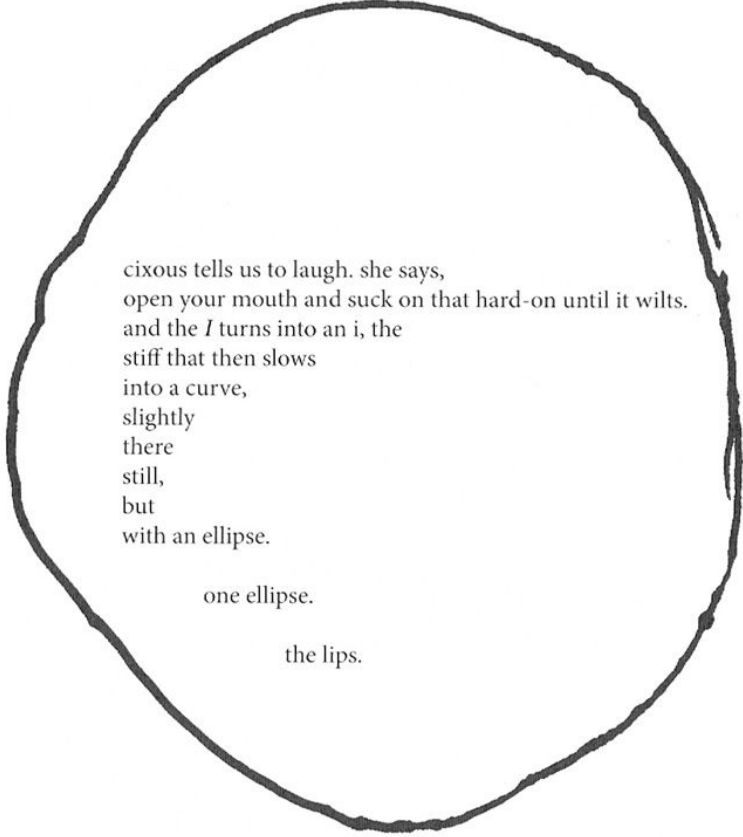
cutoff, cut-off or cut off –
one word, hyphenated, or do I hit space?

do *I* hit space?

but more. i wonder.
why it feels so cutting that *I*.
wonder why it feels so cutting, that capital pronoun.
why the capital *I*, it cuts my tongue.

would like it dislocated.

who was it that said the capital *I* is
man? the column, it's order. how
it penetrates, the phrase. how it disrupts, a
flow. it barriers, how it hits heavy, it
stops, the straight back of a hand.



cixous tells us to laugh. she says,
open your mouth and suck on that hard-on until it wilts.
and the *I* turns into an i, the
stiff that then slows
into a curve,
slightly
there
still,
but
with an ellipse.

one ellipse.

the lips.

so what do we do? decapitalise? a northern cut giving space
between the line and the dot. and this little dot in the i, the point
lit in pupils of personages in films to make them feel more alive
(wet and well) even though we know they're not real.

the dot humanises? is't us?

beheaded, it topples, away from the body (joining the nose) in the
spot on top of the mouth, the stalk, in the pores
spitting, oh that lower case i.

and in keeping with oranges, i ponder its mouth-feel.

bouche
i
bouche
i
bouche

i now enclose my mouth over the orange, and sleep
with the (little dot) in my gob.

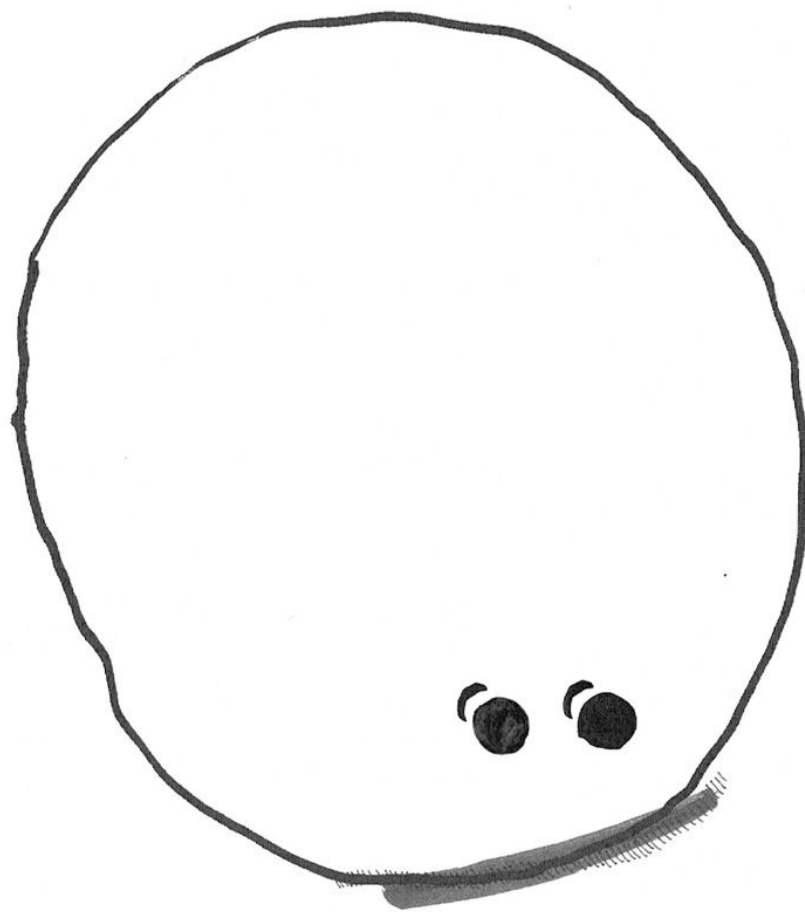
is it in the beauty
that we feel all others are eating oranges too,
that they have their own oranges to be eating anyway,
that we are all import?

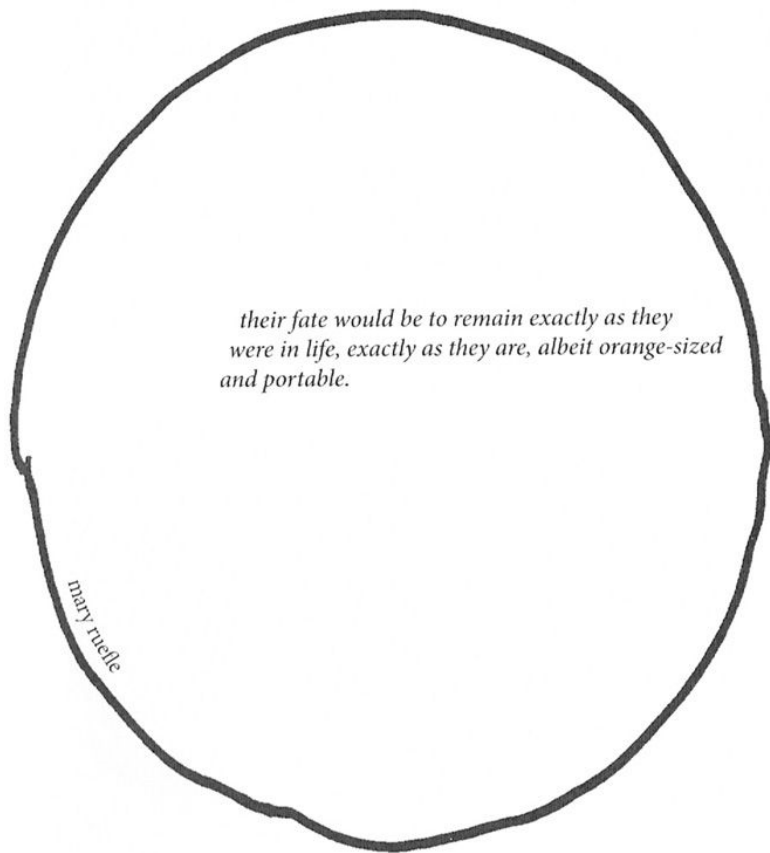
and when you put that sweet orange into your claw peeling back,
trying to figure the most knotted quandary of the day, the white
thread that encases you, i too imagine being

that navel,
that blood,
that common,
that clementine, tangerine, pomelo, citrus,
that speck on top of the stroke, spreading thin in
everyone, the pips, that

soft if not hard spot in
the miniscule

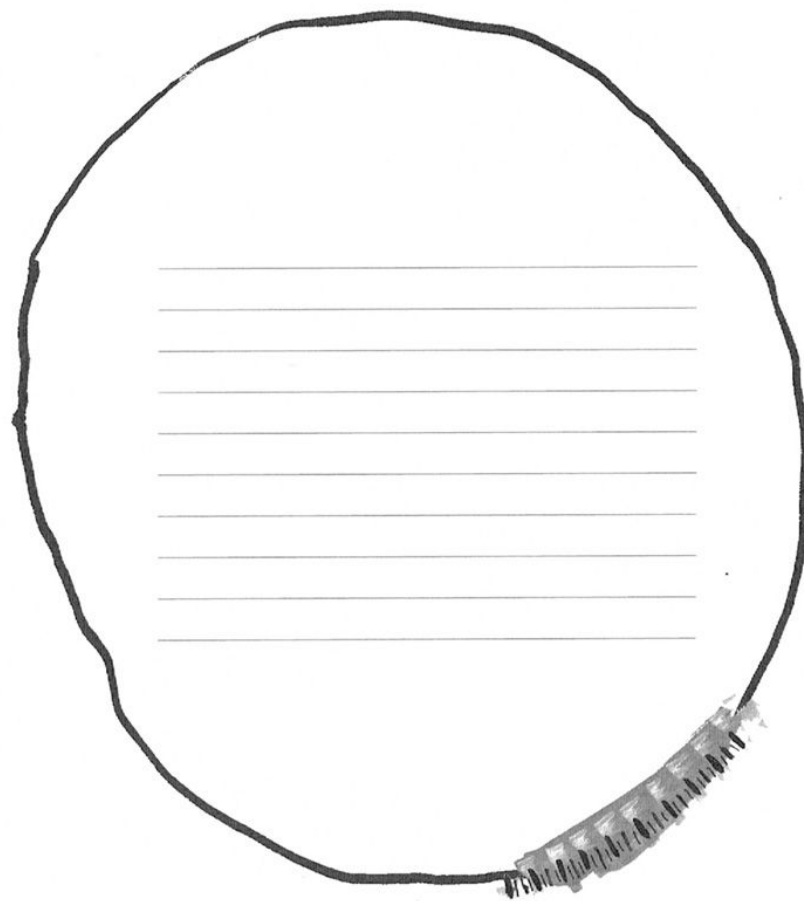
i.





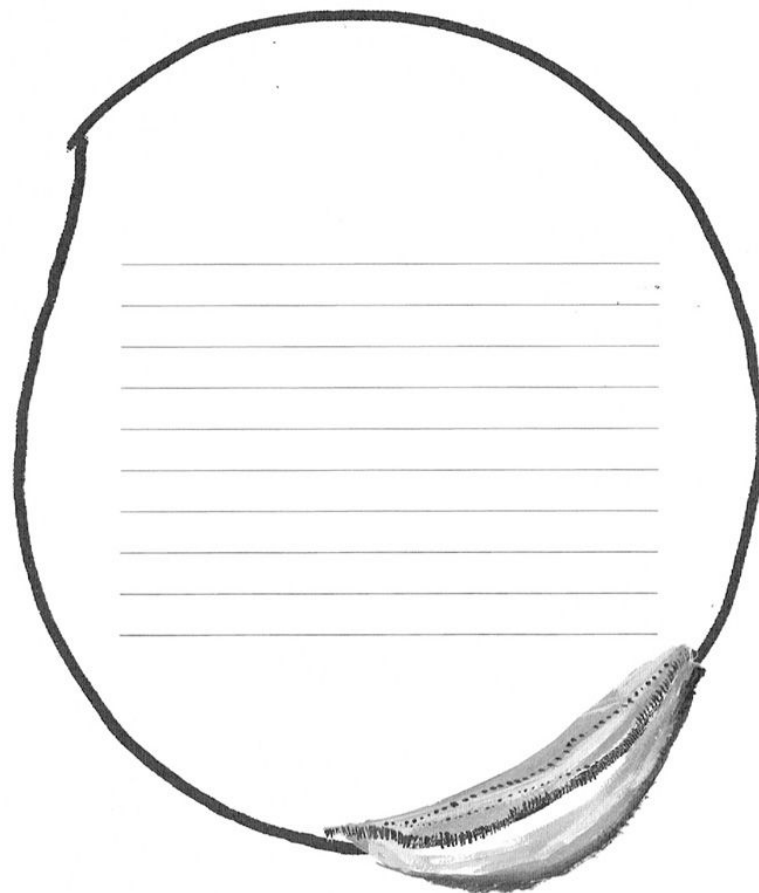
*their fate would be to remain exactly as they
were in life, exactly as they are, albeit orange-sized
and portable.*

mary ruelle



lydia davis

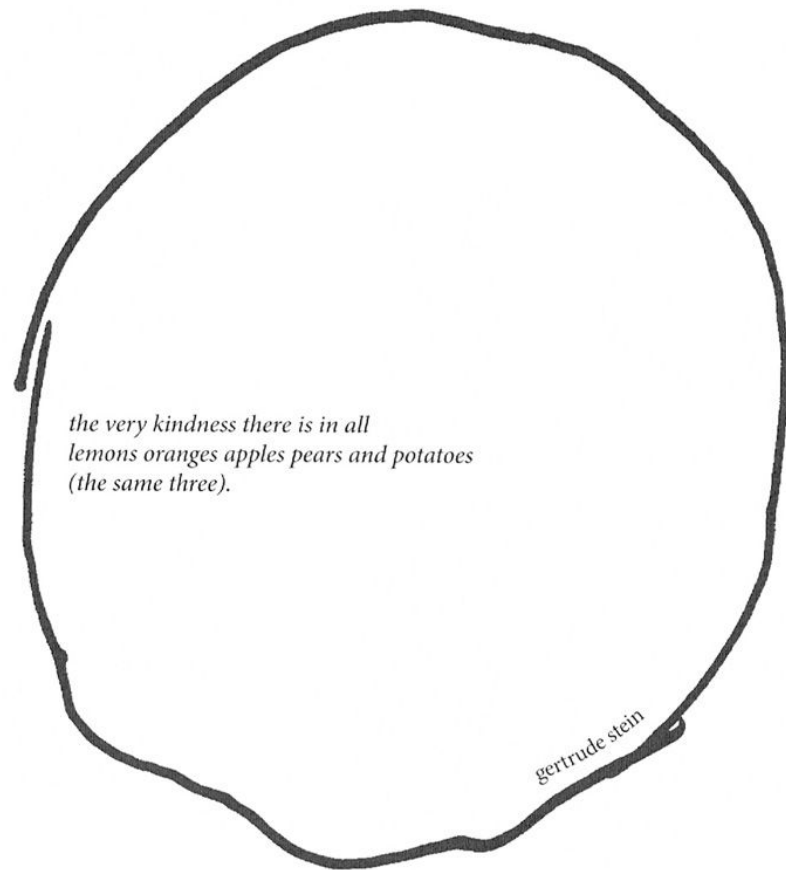
in her parents' kitchen later she tries to explain something difficult about the divorce to her father and is angry when he doesn't understand, and then finds at the end of the explanation that she is eating an orange, though she can't remember peeling it or even having decided to eat it.



James Schuyler

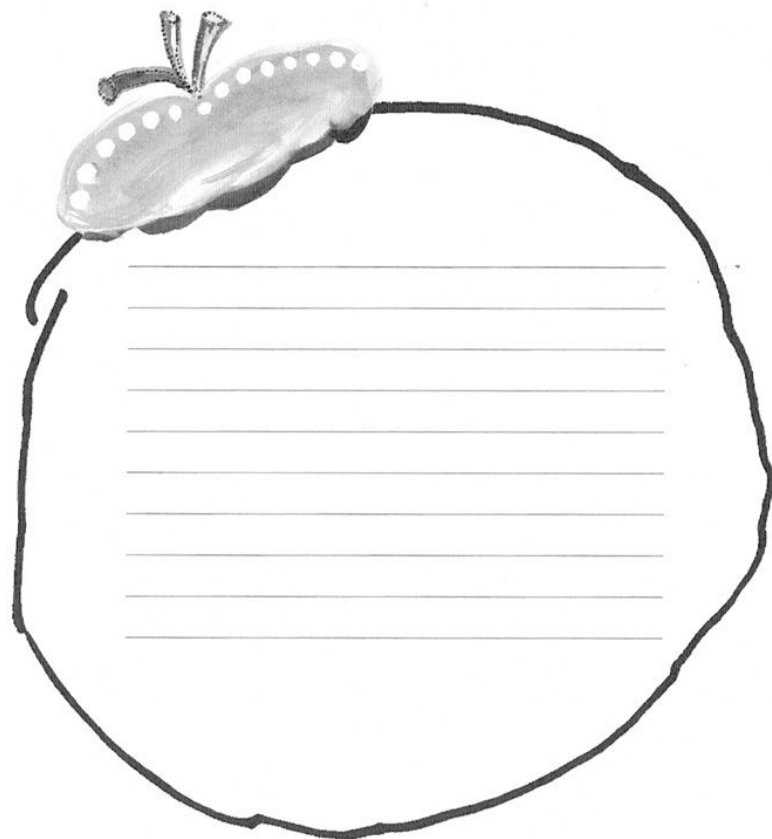
*an orange devours
the crusts of clouds and you,
getting up, put on
your daily life.*





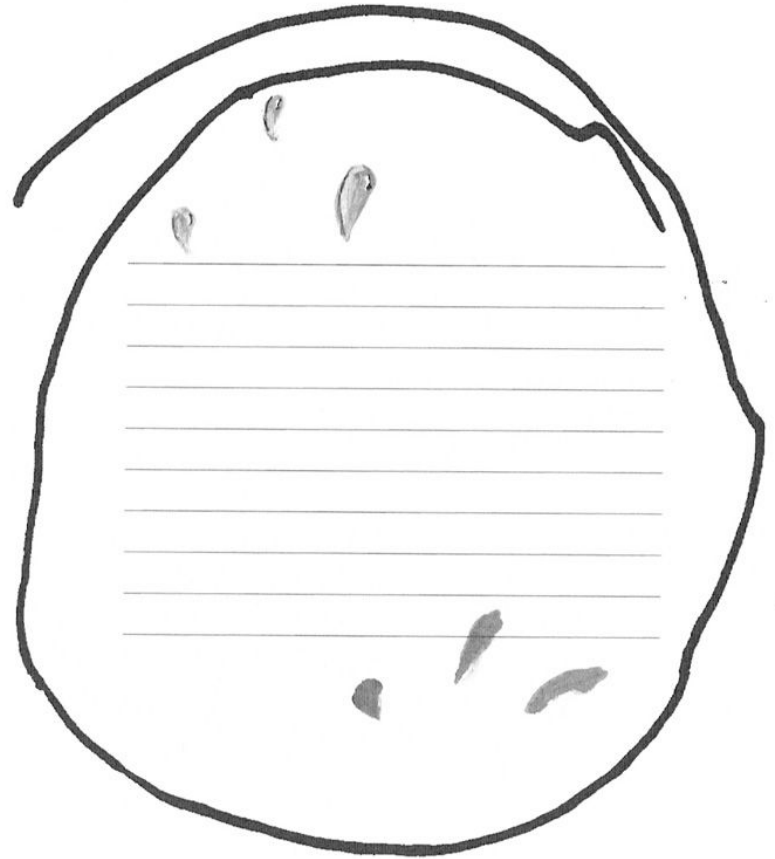
*the very kindness there is in all
lemons oranges apples pears and potatoes
(the same three).*

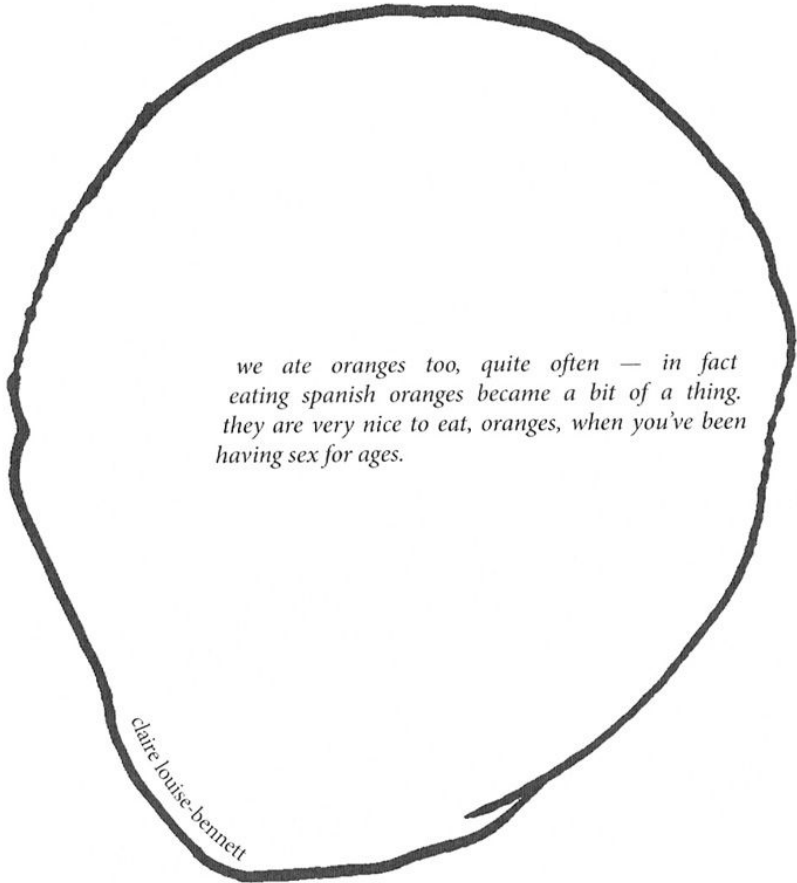
gertrude stein



philip levine

*a nine-year old travels all night by train with one suitcase and
an orange. she learns that mercy is something you can eat again and
again while the juice spills over.*





*we ate oranges too, quite often — in fact
eating spanish oranges became a bit of a thing.
they are very nice to eat, oranges, when you've been
having sex for ages.*

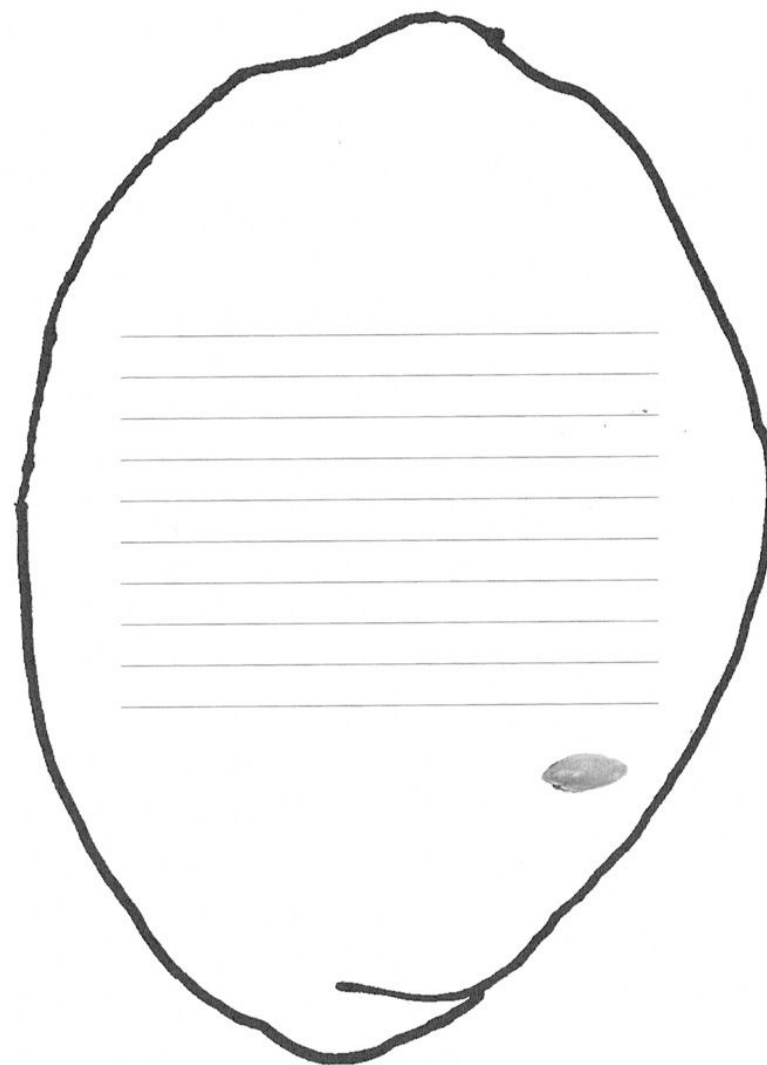
claire louise-bennett

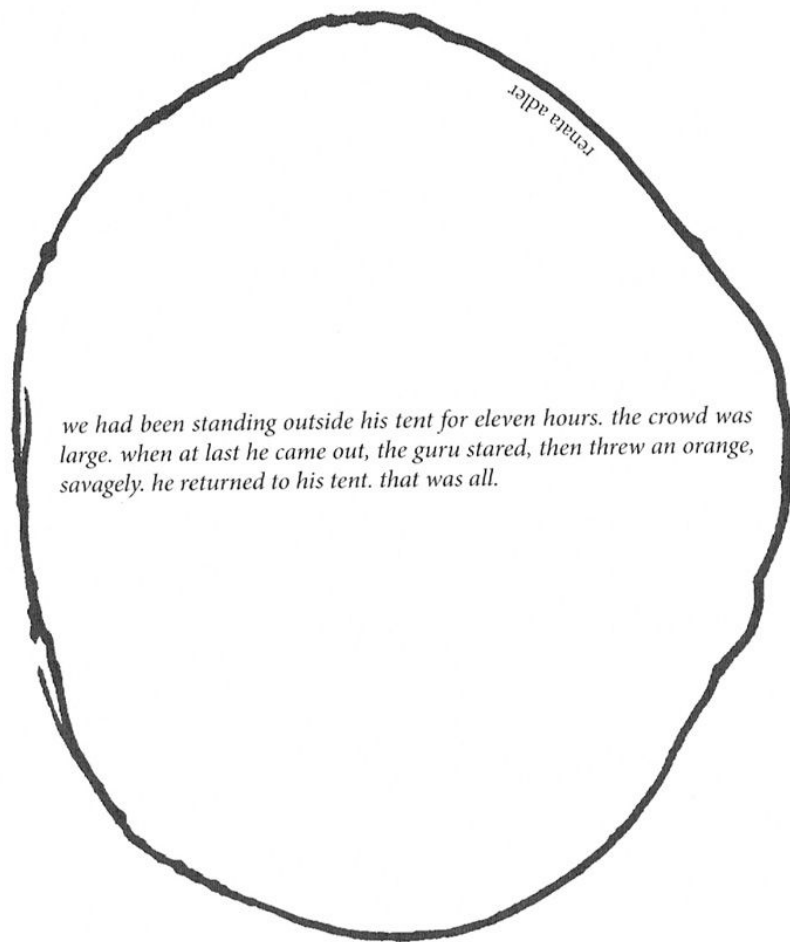




renata adler

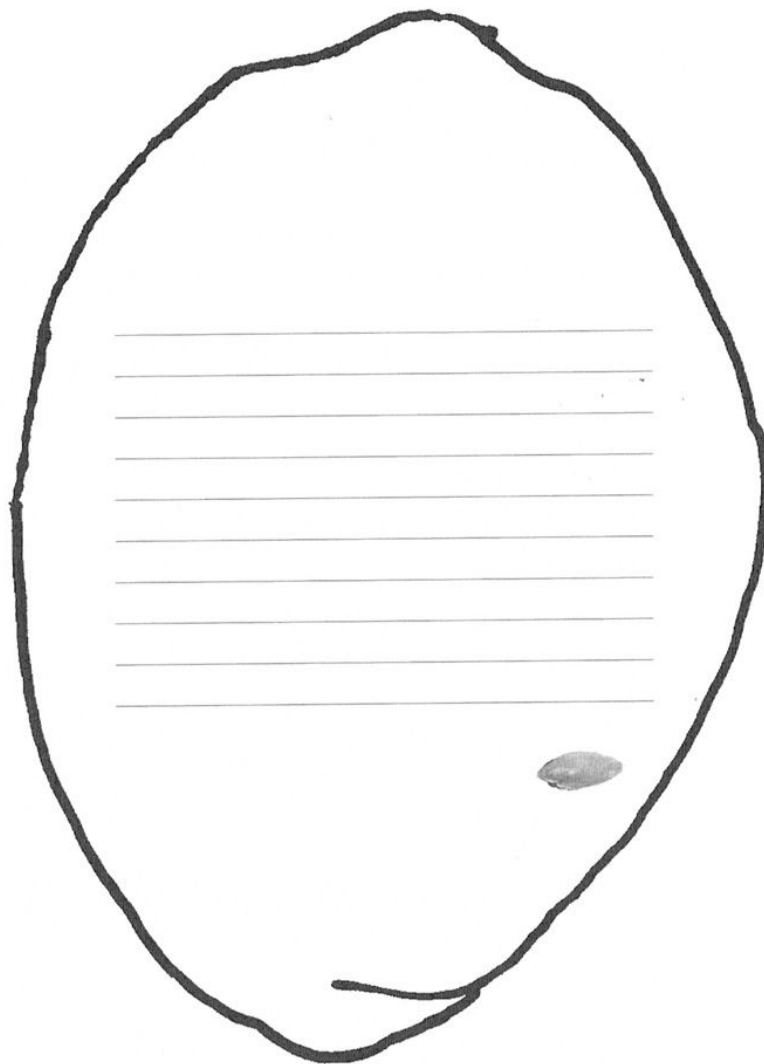
we had been standing outside his tent for eleven hours. the crowd was large. when at last he came out, the guru stared, then threw an orange, savagely. he returned to his tent. that was all.





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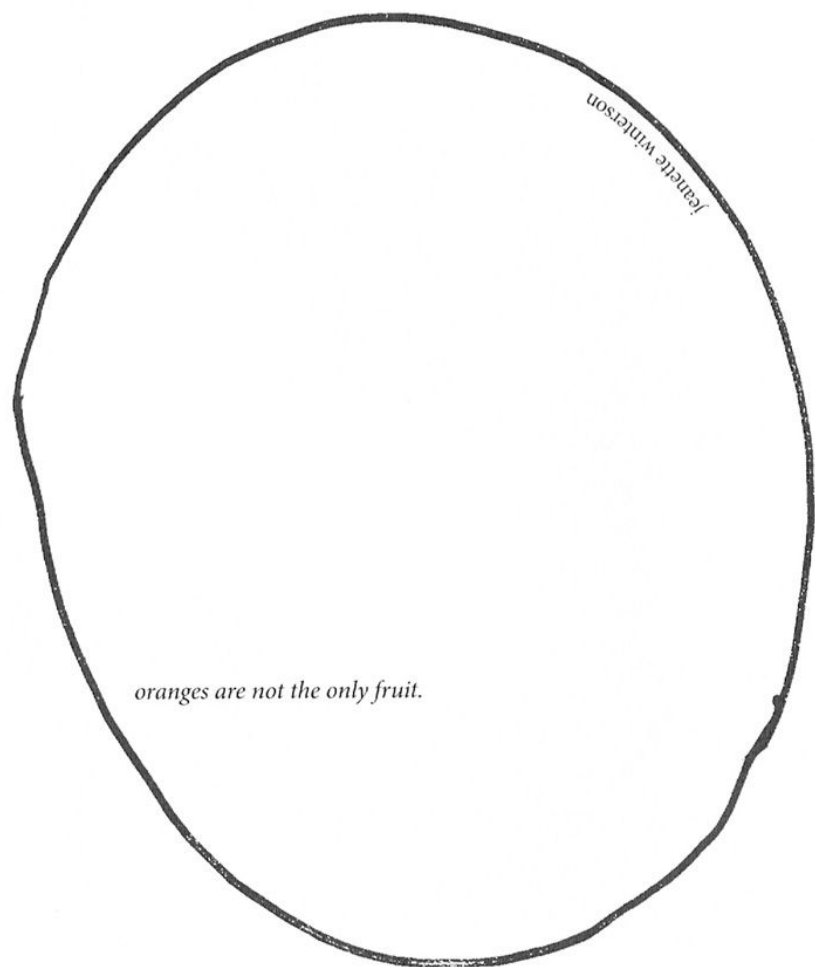
renata adler



frank o'hara

*oh my palace of oranges,
junk shop, staples, umber, basalt;*





oranges are not the only fruit.

jeanette winston

