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Youth Poetry Category – 1st Prize 2020

PERSIMMONS

By Miya Smith

My family, like our house, has tan Australian skin.

The driveway is a serpent's body of dirt and dust and potholes and footprints

The glass is blonde, receding and the roots are showing

The eucalyptus sweep the soil and seeds,

Branches hunched over from curious climbing children,

The bricks of our country house have weathered thirty summers.

They are the colour of bushfires, sunsets, rusting fence posts

Of persimmon fruit

But peel away the skin,

And inside Korea spills out like a tangled sentence of Hangul characters.

The kitchen is the pip with sauces and pastes with names I cannot pronounce,
But can describe the taste
As fluently as my mother can speak both tongues.
There is a bowl of fruit, each with an emerald hat
I take one and my mother sees

Before moved to Seoul, we lived in small country town,
Persimmon – gam – trees grew everywhere.
There was one in my appa's backyard, remember that, when we visited?
Fruit hung over the straw fence.
My friends and me would always pick neighbour's fruit,

We'd walk through the town at night, perfectly safe.
This was the 80's, countryside, nothing to worry
My umma always said,
Eat the persimmons before they fall
Before they brown and rot and buzz with flies

The aftertaste of the fruit lingers between my teeth
Sweet and juicy but tangy and tough.
My mother's Korea lives in our house.
Peel open our family, and our mother spills out.