

# Anaranjado

To eat an orange is not  
to prophesy, but years  
before my guelita sucked  
an orange section as her last  
meal on earth—sweet  
sacrament—my wife ate  
three, four, five  
oranges daily, slicing  
the skin from pole to pole  
and pulling back the peel  
as if unfolding  
a love letter. She would  
sometimes say, *there should  
be so much more.*

*Of how terrible orange  
is, and life,* I want  
to say, because I am  
remembering when my guelita  
was young and ate the oranges  
her mother offered to the Virgin,  
and how Spanish has two  
words for orange, so that  
to say the setting sun  
looks anaranjado is to say  
someone has orangeed the sky,  
dressing it with fire to meet  
the night, like my sisters  
and mother and tía  
bathed and dressed Guelita  
each day, combed her white  
hair, rubbed lotion in each  
wrinkled joint,  
to make the end burn  
cleanly, sweetly.

—John Alba Cutler

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