

QUININE

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It is not me who drives
up hill to bougainvillea house,
where phone rings endlessly.
My body hides.
Nor I who cooks tasteless meals.
He says they're delicious.
My taste buds were first to go
in October. Then numb fingertips.
Now the sun is too bright.
Our love is a bitter drink,
and I hate our gin and tonic bed
as much as the blooming bougainvillea
that mocks me through window.
Listen to double bass cadence
of Mingus, try to sow notes,
seeds of the first word
I learned to spell by sounding out: city.
Skyscrapers, asphalt, subway,
fast clip of heels on pavement,
rumble underground,
map of sidewalk cracks.

I drive towards downtown
see myself in rear view mirror.
Persephone spits pomegranate
seeds red as my taillights.