

**Malachi Edwin Vethamani**

*University of Nottingham Malaysia*

**Rambutan Kisses**

Tapau for me your rambutan kisses.

When you are gone

I will take each out

and be kissed one at a time

alone, by myself.

They will give me solace

in your absence.

Each rambutan kiss,

my silent companion

in my solitude,

until you return

and kiss me.

Brushing your bristle

on my welcoming lips.

## Mandarins

I take the first mandarin  
for the year of the Tiger,  
stand at the sink.  
Safe space for juice spray.

My thumbs pierce into  
the thick orange waxy skin,  
slipping into its core,  
its juices squelch out.

The kitchen sink is soon  
spotted with juice drops,  
my palm is drenched  
with sticky orange liquid.

The first segment slips between my lips,  
my teeth separate flesh from pits,  
juices run down my parched throat,  
I cough and splutter.

The pits fall out,  
from mouth to kitchen sink,  
other segments soon follow.  
A steady flow of juices,  
and spitting out of pits.

My eyes stray,  
more mandarins wink at me.  
I almost falter but refrain.  
The restraint is a caution,  
of lessons learned:  
all things nice  
come with a price.

## Coconut Pearl

The harsh splitting  
of the coconut into halves,  
the water splashes out,  
undesired and unwanted.

Ah! The childhood delight,  
to find a bonus fruit.  
The surprise of an inner fruit  
within one half of a coconut.

A lovely coconut pearl –  
a coconut apple,  
nestled in the coconut copra.

A gentle crushing,  
crumbling of succulent flesh,  
with a single bite,  
a bursting delight on my tongue.

A chore for Amma's coconut candy  
transforms into this unexpected reward –  
such childhood bliss.