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In Response to, What is Sugar?

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Author Bio

Nishat Tasnim is an English major at Gettysburg College, but a poet from the age of five (like many of us). Her writing is an effort to challenge the human perspective to understand the change it has gone through in the process of growing up, in an attempt to define the human experience in the only way we know-- through our words.

In Response to, What Is Sugar?

NISHAT TASNIM

Clinking in between a spoon
and a cup,
white granules of white dissolve
into nothing,
until the liquid lathers
the tongue
where it makes its great debut.

Glucose and fructose kiss
to form an insect, poisonous
with seven legs of OH.
Glucopyranosyl.
 Somehow easier
 to pronounce
 than my own mother's bengali
 name.

Complicated machines and tests
 the rotation of plan polarized light
measure the purity
for it to turn,
from "guda"—
stripped canes macheted
who was once standing arm's length above my head
kissing the sunlight
now little blocks of green and brown
the length of my palm,
to the sweet white powder poisoning us all.

Sucrose, secretes out like sweet sweat,
rolling off the slaves' back
into the tongue and throat,
the white man in Mississippi watching.

It is the silence between the clinking
of the cup and spoon
ringing in the slave master's house
that announces the judgement
of a day's labor.

 A field of sugarcane
massacred

 all for a spoon.

Black hands buried, sliced by machetes.
All in the name of God's work.

 A hole in the ground
 where they sit decomposing.

Prayer hands lifted up to God
 then cut down again,
crystallized,

 marked again in sweet sorrow.