

Blueberries

Blueberries are best when picked by the people you know. They're sweeter. More inviting, succulent.

It comes from Saturday mornings in big green cartons. From the farmers market that lives on the corner of June and red wooden wagons. When I get close, it greets with a fresh prickly air smell, a gentle kiss on the nose, or a smile from the woman standing behind the tower of glass mason jars with various patterned cloth covers which house homemade fruit jams. Familiar fruit. The carton barely fits in the freezer, but we squish the frozen waffles to the back; we make room, and spoonfuls of frozen berries fall to our bellies.

Similar to the ones that grew in the backyard of my childhood home. But they were never that good,
that blue,
that big,
that enthralling.

Like the ones Nana grew in her garden and used to make her blueberry cake. My dad loved that cake. She sprinkled sugar on top and made it in July for his birthday each year. She brought it to family gatherings when we once had those; forbidden fruit.

We used to travel north through miles of never-ending blueberry fields. The earth – she curves and rises and falls and provides – the fruits of her labor. Thousands of tiny blue specks sprawled upon hills right before our small bodies. Wearing sandals and shorts that fell past our scraped knees, a layer of berries covered the dirt in a muddled mush that got kicked up onto the tops of our almost unworthy shins and feet. Buckets and buckets of blueberries. My sister and I are flying through the bushes. Seeing who can fill the bucket up the highest, the tallest, the mightiest. Then we'll make blueberry pancakes.

When you find the good,
blue,
big,
enthralling,

blueberries, the ones that burst in between your teeth, a rich purple bleeds onto your fingertips and holds a violet tint against your lips; just as a finger held to your mouth compelling you to listen. The stains stay with you for a while. Obvious. Evident. I allow myself to live with blueberry stains on my skin. Through the kitchen, to the mailbox, in the meadow, at the park, on the train, beneath the moon, under your warm touch. It's comforting, solacing.