

# Still Life, with Pomegranates

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There's no red like the red of a ripe pomegranate,  
dusky-shaded, blood red, madly red,  
almost maroon, with a tiny constellation

of brown and black freckles  
scattered across its vermilion skin.  
This is a fruit too beautiful to eat.

For centuries, artists have tried to capture, in oils,  
the complex luminescence of their rich skins,  
slightly lopsided shapes, their protruding navels.

I've never enjoyed eating pomegranates.  
The seeds, each wrapped in a translucent shell,  
resemble blood cells, juicy, ready to burst.

The hard kernels, gritty at best, catch in my teeth  
if I try to chew them, and stain the floor  
if I spit them out. The reward is rarely worth

the labor. Still, sometimes, especially in winter,  
I'll buy a pomegranate or two, find the perfect  
wooden bowl in which to set the fruit, and create,

on my little-used dining table, a nearly perfect still life.  
It's always worth the cost and the waste.  
In January, when nothing's awake,

pomegranates remind me that all we're doing  
is sleeping, for a time, and when the sun  
grows strong enough to warm us, we'll wake.

