

STEALING FRUIT.

By dadio

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Daya bring me fruit,
Father says, his large

Dark eyes gorging on
The fruit bowl you carry,

His tongue moving over
His lips like a fat snake

Through grass. You bring
The bowl within reach of

His hand; his ringed fingers
Lazily reach out and pick at

The fruit. Apple, yes, apple,
He decides, lifting the fruit

To his opening mouth. You
Watch holding the bowl steady,

Your small hands feeling
The bowl's smoothness, the

Scent of the fruit tempts your
Nose. Put it down now, Daya,

No need to stand there like
A servant girl. You nod and

Walk back to the table and

Lay down the bowl. You are

Tempted to pick a grape, just
To taste, to sense the juiciness

On your tongue, but Father
Has not said so, has not given

Permission. You look at him
Sitting back in the chair, biting

The apple with deep relish, his
Mouth full, his eyes momentarily

Closed. Your fingers pluck a
Grape. You pop it into your mouth

And hold it still, not to swallow
In case Father opens his eyes

And sees. You look at his closed
Eyes, you wonder if he pretends

Not to see, waiting for your throat
To move, ready to judge, to scold.

The grape is in your mouth like
A soft stone. You softly crush its

Skin with your tongue; the juices
Dampening the tongue and floor of

Your mouth. Careful you do not
Choke, Daya, Father says through

A mouthful of fruit, his eyebrows
Rising, his finger reaching to poke.

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