

# False Fruit

The apple tree blooms  
white blossoms  
atop tiny bulbs  
suspiciously  
pear-shaped.

Are you sure it's an apple tree?  
I ask my aged father. He planted  
it thirty years ago.  
Yes, I'm sure, he says.

Cases of corona virus rise,  
fall and balloon  
while the apples grow  
narrow by the stem,  
full and fat on the bottom.  
These are pears! I yell,  
hoping my father will remember.  
No, it's an apple tree,  
he insists.

Long ago he dreamt the  
sapling would produce  
pecks for pies but  
the tree has never bore  
fruit till now.

While quarantined  
I've enlisted my father to  
revive his garden that once fed us  
plump veggies, hoping his  
cognition would grow.  
Mostly he grumbles  
about weeds and roots.  
A deluge washes out the squash,  
a drought shrivels the beans  
on their stalks, the cucumbers  
never even sprout. But the tree  
left alone grows  
sun-facing pomes like my  
father's oblong memory,  
appearing misshapen  
but tasting  
just as sweet.

Nancy

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Nancy Agabian is a writer, teacher, and literary organizer, working in the spaces between race, ethnicity, cultural identity, feminism and queer identity. Her recent book of auto-fiction, "The Fear of Large and Small Nations" was a finalist for the PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially-Engaged Fiction. She is the author of *Me as her again: True Stories of an Armenian Daughter* (Aunt Lute Books, 2008), a memoir, and *Princess Freak* (Beyond Baroque Books, 2000), a collection of poetry and performance texts. Nancy has taught creative writing at universities and community centers, most recently at NYU and The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in NYC. For over twenty years she has organized literary reading series that bridge communities, most recently collaborating with writers Meera Nair and Amy Paul to connect neighbors, writers, and activists in Queens, NY, with Queens Writers Resist. A proud L.A. poet and performance artist from 1990-99, she is remembered as half of the folk-punk duo Guitar Boy (with Ann Perich). She is currently a caregiver to her elderly parents in the house where she grew up in East Walpole, Massachusetts.