

## Were I To Teach A Course on God

~ Nancy Shaffer

Were I to teach a course on God  
I would begin with a plate of persimmons—  
the sweet, crisp kind, the ones more  
orange than red: the hard, squat Fuyus  
I eat each November morning on hot  
wheat cereal with almonds.

I would slice the persimmons gently  
across their fat centers, then hold them  
out. *See the star shape?* I would  
offer them, so all might wonder.

I would slice brown Bosc pears  
straight down their middles,  
so the threads of each stem  
trace wispily down to that rounded  
place where dark seeds lie, tear-shaped  
and wet in white, firm flesh.  
I would hold these halves  
silently forward, their bottoms smooth  
in the curves of my palms.

I would teach God with plates of pomegranates,  
both before they were opened and after.  
I would bring wet washcloths.  
We would bury our faces and eat:  
all that luminescent purple-red,  
those clear-bright kernels fitted in tight rows  
on small and tumbling hills—  
and all that juice, so easily broken, sweet  
and puckery at once. We would say nothing.

I would teach this way:  
with plates of fruit, a knife;  
many washcloths. With my eyes  
very large; my mouth mostly silent,  
so all might eat.