Juneberry Primer

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As a girl, I’d pronounce *compote* like *coyote*. Clafoutis rhymed with clematis or stephanotis instead of cherry or juneberry, syllables I never quite pronounced right—add to this list, a plaque and the plague; musically, a zydeco versus a xylophone.

Now I make compote with fruit and sugar on a long summer night gleaming with the off-rhymes of compound and quarter note, draughts of light pouring through the homonyms of ring and wring, a choir and quire, yearning for the humble, gold clarity of honeybees in the lacy elderberry’s arms, a rushing brook with its wild blackberries, to say only *juneberry* in the foraged dark, June and june again, June.