

Juneberry Primer

by [Karen An-Hwei Lee](#) in the [June 2024](#) issue

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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.