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In Good Taste

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In Good Taste

Lorna Van Gilst

Just inside the door, I move
past Braeburns, Red Delicious,
Golden Romas, Paula Reds,
their skins waxed gold or artificial red,
on to the strawberries—
bulging points of symmetry pushing
 through tight saran—
still-life California grapes, white and red—
mummified in styrofoam and cellophane,
great Mexican mangos,
yellow-green bananas
Doled out to Midwesterners
at 39 cents a pound,
bright red halves of watermelon
in green-rind bowls, seedless,
perfect spears of pre-scrubbed baby carrots
 in plastic bags,
deep green broccoli, trimmed
in ten-inch triple stalks,
shrink-wrapped and set in ice—

Half a world away, in El Mercado Principal,
my friend Ingrid weaves through the peopled stalls
tasting melon wedges offered
 from the points of slicing knives,
shaking mountain soil from giant carrot cones,
holding up a bunch of broccoli, packaged
 in now-limp leaves, the roots intact,
pinching potatoes from giant gunny sacks,
sorting through sweet mora berries for the ripest ones,
pressing tattered bills and rough-edged coins
 into fruit-stained hands—
Shopping sensuously.