

Three influences

My guru told me to think about where my food comes from. The short term vision of most people is that peas come from the supermarket. But he said I should remember the seed, and the plant that grows from it; the care and attention of the farmer, and the sun, day after day that shines on the plants; and the nutrients that are sucked up by the roots of the plant. And most importantly of all the care put in by all the people on the way from seed to frozen peas, in packets.

The advertisement says that the apples juice that comes in a carton is made from apples ripened by the summer sun, all summer long.

My mother said that it was a strange destiny that the peas in the dish I was going to eat on Christmas Day, came from Gujarat, in India; how was our destiny mixed up with the farmer's destiny, who grew the peas that one day would end up four and a half thousand miles away, on our plates?

There is no attachment
And no element of envy.
It is just that the peas
That have grown in the fields
Are not going to be for them.
His wife,
And four children
Three little girls
And a boy
Will eat the shells of the peas
And the small peas
That didn't grow

Big enough
For the bellies of the rich.
His wife doesn't think
Beyond their shells
And doesn't look at the juice popping
Peas
And never thinks that they
Could be so good for her little
Brood of children
Growing up around her.
She slices the shells up very finely
And boils them until she can
Almost mash them.
In the end she adds the
Tiny little peas
That didn't grow big enough
And serves them up along
With rice to her children
And husband.
They are delicious and they
Only get them at harvest time.
The Hessian sacks are filled
To the brim with the
Crop of peas,
Enough to feed the rich.
And he rattles the coins of his
Reward in his pockets.
He smiles the simple
Honest smile of a worker
As he places the valuable coins
Into his wife's small hard worn hands.
They never think beyond.
They never think who will eat
These peas that they have grown
That he woke up every morning at four

To turn on the water to the fields,
To create the juice that one day
Someone else will eat with relish.