

MINT TEA IN MOROCCO

In July's bright white heat,
bees buzz by your mouth,
seeking bee-size sips of tea
heavy with the sugar
broken with a hammer
from a rock hard cone
wrapped in purple paper.

Chunks of sugar
big as walnuts
soak with tea leaves,
and fresh-picked mint
crammed into the teapot,
with boiled water filling leftover spaces
the way the heat expands around us
hypnotizing every bit of air.

Even the bees seem to sweat
in this corner of Marrakech,
using their wings to fan themselves.
We learn to drink around them
as they perch on the rims of our cups
dangerously close to our lips.

What matters most here
is not the bees,
or the syrupy sweet tea,
green from mint leaves.
Or the chipped china teapot
refilled each time we drain it.

What matters most
is the tiny bit of shade
cooling our table.
We melt like wet sugar
as we sip for hours,
eagerly anticipating darkness.

—Susan Wolbarst

