

## Juneberry Primer

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

Published on June 5, 2024

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.