Today, a sparrow was perched
on the banana tree,
so the hummingbirds were (probably)
        too frightened to land.

And near the galaxy's core,
a black hole stripped a pearl-
blue star into ribbons of fire and poetry
is all one has strength to hear

when we don't have enough daylight
to waste even a little food:

leftovers go to stir-fry,
stir fry becomes soup,

and soup is what a lover needs
after a lifetime of saving the world.

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Ryka Aoki

Ryka Aoki (www.rykaryka.com) is a poet, composer, teacher, and novelist. Her latest novel, *Light From Uncommon Stars* is forthcoming from Tor Books in Fall 2021. Her first novel, *He Mele a Hilo*, was published by Topside Press in 2014. She is a two-time Lambda Literary Award finalist for her collections *Seasonal Velocities*, and *Why Dust Shall Never Settle Upon This Soul*. Ryka has also worked with the American Association of Hiroshima Nagasaki A-Bomb Survivors, and two of her compositions were adopted as the organization's official "Songs of Peace." She has MFA in Creative Writing from Cornell University and is the recipient of a University Award from the Academy of American Poets. She is a professor of English at Santa Monica College.