GAIL MARTIN

As It Is With Peaches

—for Danna 1953–2018

The skin should give slightly to touch, but not too much, almost call to you from where it rests,

pink with breathlessness, not mushy. The softening says the time is near when you can’t bear to look

but can’t look away. It will become the only thing you think about. Relentless as a hunger without appetite, it will persist in its membrane, as if deferring. How does a bird watch fruit incubating, preparing itself for harvest, and know the precise moment to bite? As it is with peaches, with death, the window of ripeness, of right now, is so small. This morning seems too soon, a day more and tender flesh turns dark. And in the case of the flavorless peach, one day more or less would not have changed a thing.