

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.