

Katharine B. Ferguson

Peaches

When I was seven
my father planted a peach tree
beside the wood of our backyard.
Each sweet smelling spring
brought petals that fell away from
firm green peaches taut with promise.

I thought they would ripen
from some inherent urge
to be like all other storybook peaches
and bloom full and soft,
to be plucked and eaten by day
and lit by fireflies and moonlight by night,
though, somehow, in the fairyland of summer
they always grew sick and died,
fell to rot,
fermented sickly sweet in the humid air
and stifled

like hope, like touch,
like the promise of you,
like wantings that remain hard
and will not ripen.