

Peach Kiss

A tree of peaches,
all unshaved,
balanced on a hill.

The soil concretes more
like sand than charcoal.
The soil concretes prints
of children's feet and laughs,
a blue jays first bounce back.
The soil needs light
so day is always breaking,
the sun a peach
without shadow.

In the shade, night stars
are still settled between
peach freckles and morning.
In the shade, every breath
sticks to cheek,
like the tree's sap.
In the shade, women pray
to live with arms so wide
they stretch their chest open.

If they are denied,
they kiss still
every tree wrinkle and peach stem.
They return.
Their lips seep
through every vein of the tree
and enter the sap.
Enter the roots.

Enter one peach.
The peach least
sun-jealous.
The peach least
shaven.
The peach that holds
like a first hand.
The peach that tastes
of kiss
from holy women
and kiss

of erosion of ocean
waves on soil sand
millions of years ago,
when the hill was island.

The tree of peaches,
all unshaved,
balanced on the hill.
Biting into the one many kissed peach,

when you look at me.

With Distance

Someone should hold your hand
with palms like a
first mother
and carry you,
sand-burn saved, to
a front-door-shored
home.

Someone should hold me
with knuckles of a
wolf's jaw
and drop me on
the metal teeth that
hunters dentist
the forest floor with.

Someone should push me
slow
off the tallest mountain.
Leave you
in clouds residence.
Someone,
who does not know my mirror
or your name,
must create a disease
airborne
should we know each other's rooms.

This someone,
with one hand of teeth and
one of tongue,
can be all that holds us,
love.
And this someone
must.
Because I cannot.

Nana

As we are honest now,
I don't remember you either.
Not before this cloud
hovered you.

You have always been skinny enough
to not seem too tall,
never laughing too loud,
and converted Jewish for Papa.
Last week Mom,
the one you call Shithead,
told me your niece,
Georgia,
would be visiting soon.
She has the same name as my sister
though they have never met.

Yesterday you grabbed my cheeks
wrapped your freckled bones around me
kissed my head
and told me you love me so much
"beautiful lady."
When you grab my cheeks again,
you stick out your tongue
and bite it
like you did when the skies were seen.

I have only two thoughts of you
before this cloud
in which you are not
sitting behind Papa,
combing your same red hair
with your same red nails.
Each are triggered by your
rare
bite.

(One)
We are on the top of the staircase
some year past,
and you pull in your tongue
past your teeth
and bite your lip instead.

This tongue roll,
which forgot North Carolina
long before you forgot me,
tells me
you are about to pinch my butt
and laugh like
you'd like to see the cloud try.

(Two)
You yell at me.
I cry.
My mom (Shithead) tells me you are
so used to biting your tongue
sometimes your nice breaks.
It has to.

Now, you only bite your tongue
when your nails bite my cheeks.
I record your voice
and my Georgia wears your clothes.
I met your Georgia yesterday
and watched you pinch her cheeks.

You call me little asshole
and then "pretty lady."
You call Papa "the Master"
or "Shitass."
You ask me,
sometimes,
in words sewn together
with hands
unsure and unpainted,
to write down everyone's real names.
Your daughter:
Dianna.
Your husband:
Kenny.
Your granddaughters:
Georgia, Lilah Anne,
and me.

I ask you,
Annette,
if I will be saved
from your cloud
because my name,

unlike my sisters',
does not know yours.

But,
if I am spared
of your name,
of your bite:
will I forget you faster?

Healing

Away from the navel gazing
might be best.
On a soil with my chin
bent up,
my hands could do the stomach watching
for me.
Finger nail lashes.

On a ground,
maybe,
where the folds of my eyes
mind not
the folds of my stomach
I could plant rows of daisies,
from fingernail dirt dug
into belly.
Soil soft and deep like.

I could plant kisses on creases
and open the ground
when I laugh.

My life line meets my navel
and my birth insists:
the smile of a belly full.