

**Pollination: Outskirts of Raleigh, NC 1968**

When I found it,  
it had to have been more than twenty years  
since King's Peach orchard had held the land,  
worked by the multi-colored browns, blacks,  
and yellowed tans  
picking the sweetness  
that sometimes left its juices  
slipping down the chin

At least twenty years  
since the King's truck wound its way  
to Holly Springs, Fuquay Varina, and Willow Spring  
picking workers,  
hauled in the back  
packed—in too close to sit,  
they rose and fell  
breast against chest  
rocking in the truck's uneasy sway

When King sold his land  
the neat rows of peach trees were cleared,  
begetting a neighborhood named Orchard.  
Our house was the first one built  
decades after anyone had ridden,  
in the shadow-play of sundown  
rubbing back to front, homeward-bound  
in a King's Peach truck

That summer was a hot witness  
to alliterative assassinations  
claiming Medgar, Martin, Malcolm—  
to Camelot days slain along with my innocence.  
That June, I found the first bright spot,  
a blood-red end to staying out after dark,  
running through the Orchard, just like the boys

It was way past too long,  
but, there it stood  
with its longish leaves, claiming the ground:  
a wayward peach tree,  
unfettered by rows or time