

By Jennifer Tonge

Come here's

a peach he said
and held it out just far
enough to reach beyond his lap
and off-

ered me

a room the one
room left he said in all
of Thessaloniki that night
packed with

traders

The peach was lush
I hadn't slept for days
it was like velvet lips a lamp
he smiled

patted

the bed for me
I knew it was in fact
the only room the only bed
The peach

trembled

and he said Come
nodding to make me
agree I wanted the peach and
the bed

he said

to take it see
how nice it was and I
thought how I could take it ginger-
ly my

finger-

tips only touch-
ing only it Not in
or out I stayed in the doorway
watching

a fly

He stroked the peach
and asked where I was from
I said the States he smiled and asked
how long

I'd stay

The fly had found
the peach I said I'd leave

for Turkey in the morning I
wanted

so much
to sleep and on
a bed I thought of all
the ways to say that word
and that

they must
have gradient
meanings He asked me did
I want the peach and I said sure
and took

it from
his hand He asked
then if I'd take the room
It costs too much I said and turned
to go

He said
to stay a while
and we could talk The sun
was going down I said no thanks
I'd head

out on
the late train but
could I still have the peach
and what else could he say to that
but yes

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