

A poem for my sons when the day is too much or not enough

by [Jacob Stratman](#) in the [February 13, 2019](#) issue

*Basket of Peaches*, by Joseph Decker, 1885, oil on canvas

The checker at Walmart this morning  
thinks the winter weather's been bipolar.

Record highs one week, then lows in the 20s.  
Our little maple started to bud

in mid-February, she says. A hard freeze  
has made it sad now, she says. A local

landscaper, a buddy of mine, I tell  
her, knows the trees are tough around here.

They'll be fine, he says. It's not like  
we're growing peaches anymore

or nothin', I remind her and leave.  
But it's hard considering an Arkansas summer

without peaches, even spotted ones  
like Decker gives us, half-dumped, upset

from a bucket—the kind, if we couldn't eat,  
we'd use for batting practice; the kind,

not spotted and pocked by disease, the old  
ladies would turn into cobbler and the old men

would mix with cranked ice cream; the kind  
that might entice an oriole or two to lounge

on a fence post and maybe talk a bit about  
the fickleness of the coming spring weather.