Firebugs
by Emily Lazar

Fat ones with the squishing centers, green fluorescence popped and spread by a kid brother over his dirty white T-shirt one August night in scratchy grass

Some unrulier child than he had taken a ragged bite out of the moon but left no lack of visibility and he was ready with grubby finger-stubs to grasp and extinguish their power sources: filmy fluid sealed between beating wings, like precious oil in lighthouse lamps

They were amber spies, their insides like kaleidoscopes, like lemon light born, reborn, in orbs, simply a sacrifice for a towhead scamp, their perfume-bottle bodies carelessly broken over clothing by a child, to make him a selfish emulation so he too could shine in the dark
His mother’s sigh deflated her, saying: “It’ll come out in the wash,”
the last trace of them,
soft blazes ensnared by a clumsy carrier
who smashed their backs for the gift of light

And they go
out like a light, brother,
they go out like a light,
out like a light,
like a light