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