

Where in the World We Had a Mason Jar

I went outside on the porch after she told me she was leaving, not really thinking of what she said or how she said it. It was more about the way she had one hand on the dinner table and the other just right under where I couldn't see.

She was in the kitchen now, moving plates and clinking glasses together like it would matter what I heard in there. I leaned over the deck, half of me out over the green lawn, and watched the lightning bugs fly up.

It was like double pistols being cocked when she stepped out on those deck boards, two small clicks from her shoes. She said something about going – nothing to say about staying. I kept my back to her and watched those tiny wings glow.

They blinked in the darkness, right from their edges, on out until covered again, closing that small spread up tight. One flew up even with my face and I grabbed the little ball of lightning in one big-handed swoop.

I turned to ask my wife where in the world we had a mason jar, but I could see her through the screen inside, her head leaning against the wall, casting a shadow over her eyes.

I took a stride towards the door, then stopped, thinking of what it would feel like to lose her. Then I opened my hand to see the bug spinning on my palm, pushed it into my mouth and swallowed its light.

Jonathan Starke

I Was Boiling Eggs

I was boiling eggs
and forgot the precise time for runny yolks
so bowed to greater knowledge
and took the time to heart.

Distracted by that exact thought,
and with one minute to go,
I stubbed my toe

and the world ended.

Jack Cooper Stimpson

Driving the Coast

I look at you in profile: one hand
on the wheel, the other resting
on the gear stick, and I know
that I shouldn't, but I love you.

The moving backdrop of an open
window: I can see the coarse rub
of the tide wash up onto the crumbling
coast and feel something like kinship.

You keep your eyes on the road,
shifting a gear, breathing with
the engine. All I hear is the constant
shushing of the tide; every drop

in that wide stretch of salt-water
pleads for silence and reminds me
that a moon-pulled body will not
rest next to a steady driver.

Zoe Mitchell