

## *In the Entrails of a Mason Jar*

Mom says my silhouette  
resembles a glass Coca-Cola bottle  
filled with chilled  
dark liquid  
condensed moisture  
coating its smooth curves

Not to knock her verve,  
but I feel more like a Mason Jar.  
My body is clear cut distortions  
holes cut in my tin brain  
let that thick air rush in—  
nurture the fireflies  
in my big belly  
their lit bodies just contortions  
inside my cylindrical walls

It's July,  
but soon these leaves  
will begin to fall  
and the fireflies that  
dwell in the swell of my ribcage  
will be put out  
The light within me fades  
as the summer sun cascades through me

My glow is snuffed  
dead fires rest within me  
their ashes  
inhabit dead bodies  
five twitching  
firefly carcasses  
littering my bowels  
never to be passed on  
to the next world  
we were meant to meet

I wish I could stare  
at my war torn

feet and smooth their souls  
Whisper,  
“sweet baby child,  
don’t cry  
The biggest fire  
rises for you  
every damn day”  
I’d press smiles  
into them  
then maybe they’ll  
continue to carry me for miles

I’ve still got Pantheons to erect  
Ballads to belt out:  
Nina’s thick honeyed voice  
let these  
*blacker berry* girls  
know the lack of gaps  
between their thighs  
aren’t strange fruits  
that the ropes in daddy’s store closet  
are not the noose  
that’s going to cut them loose  
from this kind of pain  
that bleach and brillo pad  
won’t cure the blacker-than-black skin  
they inherited from dad

*Child* you must not hate yourself  
for you have fireflies  
that begin you  
and even when they die—  
simmer and rot within you  
know that Phoenixes will rise  
from their ashes