

Joshua Poteat

*From J.G. Heck's 1851 Pictorial Archive of Nature and
Science Illustrating*

I see fireflies as perforations, the meadow

as graphed squares of abandonment.

This is no way to live. And vision isn't insight,
it's almost ephemeral, though how much

can the sky take of the moon's constant betrayal,

while the sun is burning off its orphans below?

Sharpened at an angle, the moon slits the hill, sifts the wind
for truths, no death to hide. I once thought

that fireflies could speak, across the woods

their message wavering after twilight had gone

and left us alone, the shadow of my lost hand
haloed with crushed moths. What is spun out

in devout silence falls eventually to ruin, coarsens

our every veil. I should have known.

All of our endings cannot be turned away.
The fireflies are content to outlive me.

Cocoons frail-winged in sleep can't wait to outlive me.

This is a matter for the moon, momentary bower

where the fences are down and the animals
do not move for fear or sadness.

cont.

Appendix: III

I see fireflies
as abandonment.
This vision isn't
ephemeral, though
the moon's
orphans
moon the wind
for truths . once
the woods
after twilight
left us
haloed
in devout ruin
. I should have
turned away.
outlive me.
outlive me.
This bower
fences down the
fear .