**Elemental**

Cynthia Ventresca

We sit, my father and I, listening to jazz

recorded live in the 60’s,

sounds of laughter from the tipsy audience,

their chinking whisky glasses. He’s almost ninety.

Late summer flickers through the screen door and puddles

next to his wheelchair.

He remembers August mornings gone but for traces,

like the whiff of cigar in the hallway

after he would leave for work. Pulling up by the house,

purple evenings, his hair white with brick dust—

me running barefoot chasing lightening bugs

over lawns.

His pickup rests beneath garage fluorescents, red stripes

along the sides still shining.

He talks of hopping in, driving through the city, windows

down, wind rushing

around his face. With the back of one thick hand

he wipes water from his brown eyes,

and I leave the room for a second to cry a little

because we know—we’ve learned

from each other, from lightening bugs—

there’s an order to things. You can’t capture beauty

and keep it the same, so you let it in when it comes,

cup it in your hands, then let it go.