

WOMEN IN CANDLE FLAME

Jessie C. Grearson

Shaped like a milkweed pod, or a canoe
thin at the top, tapered in, in blue
she's golden, she's see-through

the wick is a whole other woman
a wicked stepmother
who's gotten what she deserves
a crooked back
a burning face
a black braided body

This, all at the golden center
this small hot burr
glowing in the taller one's skirts

She tries to keep her skirts down
her arms sleek to her sides
in a ring of hot wax she can't step from
that will never brim over.