

JULIE SOPHIA PAEGLE

Fire Fly

The eggs of fireflies hatch in about three weeks. They spend two years as luminescent larva, and, after several molts, spend one month pupating. The longest-lived adults survive about seven days, so time is of the essence.

—Lucille Spovak, *The Animal Kingdom and the Clock Biological*

Curtains edge the courtyard, & flare alive where
ever sparks wander out from years of instar—

They glowed through molts, now flash through air
& all that being grown connotes: this winged lantern, that ar-

dent consort come-hither blinking on an isobar,
some hours breeding, some twilights ajar, then dark—

lasting but fast as glass flash-frozen in air, from lava far-
flung along a nuée ardente, that ash en masse on fire berserk-

ing burn down-slope toward highway, city, harbor & what stark
charred world can ever emerge in the wake

of a mountain reinventing its mark
on the curving edge of planet. Days break

on curtains beaten; on courtyard stones swept warm;
along a scorched harbor. Soils form.