

## diphenyl oxalate

diphenyl oxalate (n.): a solid ester whose oxidation products are responsible for the chemiluminescence in a glowstick

i.

the drugstore glowstick curled around my knuckles and  
cracking in my palm gives off more light than i ever will

ii.

when i was seven i fell asleep with a pink one in my mouth and  
chewed it as i slept for something solid to hold onto  
the made-in-china fluid spilled out  
and stained the inside of my cheek till i was glowing, glowing

iii.

i don't believe in the divine but now i mumble a prayer  
to the lightning bug gods to let me pour out of my skin;  
let my epidermis crack like so many knuckles and  
spill out, stain the white shag carpet at my feet

iv.

not the 99-cent neon i roll between my fingertips,  
but something dark and oozing and long past its sell-by date  
that cannot be encased in polypropylene

v.

no matter if my veins snap with my sanity  
if it means i no longer leave a stain  
on everything i touch.