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Happiness

James Richards

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Happiness



James Richards

Frogs on fire. Dried and pinned
to newsprint. Legs stretched straight. Eyes
open, blind. That was the fun we had

in the June-marsh outside the fence
of Farmington's amusement park.
Fists full of frogs, cream bellies bulging—

theirs and ours. Me, Buddy, and Clara
flinging them, watching them fall, accompanied
by the roller-coaster's roar, and the scream

of spirits. We all fell that summer.
Was it the kiss inside the skeleton of a car
hidden in tall grass, the cigarette butts we sucked?

I ran through the fields seeing only green,
tasting smoke-stain and Clara's spit—real
laughter catching up with me. Falling

never crossed my mind; bones and blood
were evidence, not fears. Grass stains, scabs—
proof that happiness is coming down.