Aeons of Wishes

Ralph Salisbury
the pear and the plum leaves remind me of children scratching hundreds of matches flared red against a sky as gray as asbestos

my mother comes back to life as when she brought her own mother back not screaming cancer at her intestines but calm and giving me cookies a substitute grandma the one resurrection my Christian mom could give her "Wild Indian" son who was four and bored by all the lovey talk and strangers' names and finally stole some kitchen matches which hit with a rock cracked like pistol shots

Dad drunk and shooting at ghosts again myself my mother's "little man" begging him to behave

he grew quiet then quieter still too quiet now for his kid thirty some years of naughtiness gone into wish for understanding

a pear and a plum one mine and one belonging to the grandmother next door two Independence Days ago we lit her Mexican fireworks hidden for years from the city's safety laws and liberated the sky of Monroe Street Madison Jefferson and Friendly the best president of all my three year old daughter who chanted "whooppee I'm a Cherokee" voted for him
she's five this fall
her birthday on Halloween a week ago
the pear and the plum
leaves birthday candle flames aeons of wishes
starring asbestos sky