



PROJECT MUSE®

---

## Little Neon Butts

Helen Bradfield Shambaugh

Appalachian Heritage, Volume 36, Number 1, Winter 2008, pp. 86-87 (Article)

Published by The University of North Carolina Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/aph.2008.0006>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/237276>

## LITTLE NEON BUTTS

---

Helen Bradfield Shambaugh

Sitting in late evening,  
with no lamps as yet lit,  
Enjoying the peacefulness,  
A brilliant little patch of light,  
glows against my windowpane.  
Going to the window to peer out,  
I behold dusk transformed.  
A shower of cooling rain,  
Has refreshed grass and trees.  
For the first time this season,  
Little neon butts of lightning bugs,  
are lighting the evening,  
Dozens of them flashing on and off,  
against dark blue twilight.  
I know they are properly called fireflies,  
We country folks say, “lightning bugs.”  
I deny the truth that they are flies or bugs.  
Beautiful in the darkness,  
Too brilliant to be fire,  
too small to be lightning.  
I laugh at myself saying “neon butts,”  
—as if that is better.  
Instantly the sight takes me back to childhood.  
“Let’s catch lightning bugs.”  
Begging a jar with a lid,  
in which to poke air holes,  
I run with the others.  
But, I do not like this game.  
Eventually, the lid will be removed,  
Survivors will go free. Still,  
I don’t want to turn off one little shining light.

It's hard to say, "I don't want to play,"  
But I say it and sit down.  
Now in my twilight years, I think,  
Had only I found that courage other times in life,  
My wish as night deepens?  
Could my one little God-given light,  
Beautify darkness, sometime, for someone.  
Even if just for a moment.  
Shine little lights,  
FLY LITTLE NEON BUTTS.