

by Mary Crockett Hill
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JARS

There are many ways to fill them, so much
on this side of sanity that must be kept.

Buttons, of course you think of buttons,
coins, Q-tips, bolts, wads of string,

but have you given thought
to what should not be preserved?

My brother Sam, for example, would fart
his rankest disappointments

into an empty mayonnaise jar
and keep it on the mantle

until we young ones returned.
"Edgar, I have something for you,"

he'd almost sing. A flying headbutt,
a body slam, and Edgar

was pinned to the floor, his nose
mashed into the open mouth of glass.

Also this: tiny sharks, dismembered fingers,
unborn anythings: all the bloated

wonders on a laboratory shelf.
If I were a better person I might say love

should never be contained
but forgiveness must be kept jarred
on your bedside table where you could find it
even when you wished you could not.

MARY CROCKETT HILL

I am not that person. I am the one
who thinks of toenail clippings and lard,

peaches waxing bluish-brown,
the body-juice of bees.

Is it possible that toenails equal love?
Lard, forgiveness?

Might the million jars of our world
choreograph their own end —

wrenching themselves open at the same
exact moment to spew their contents in a whirled

rebellion, the air flocked with all the things
we should have thrown away?

I've been told Pandora's box
was really a jar, and she herself

made of earth and water, a jar
full of the need to open

what the gods had given her —
plague, sorrow, poverty

of mind, and the hope
that what was to come

could be both binding
and boundless.