**Whether Trees Have Bones**

Emily Patterson

I keep a careful list of your lexicon:

single words, mostly nouns—*bird bib*

*moon mouse*—and miniature phrases

that mirror mine—*thank you bless you*

*there you go*—until today, when you

watched a leaf spiral from your fingers

and said *I dropped it*—your first

sentence, entirely declarative,

a construct all your own. Every day,

we move deeper into this world

of words bound to become questions

with answers I don’t know.

Someday, for instance, you might

ask *whether trees have bones,*

and how will I respond? But today

your small hand warms in mine.

Today we walk the January streets,

stepping over limbs from last night’s

storm split open on the sidewalk,

insides rich as marrow.