**Poem Beginning in a River**

Nadine Klassen

There are children - as many as a fleet,

dragging their thin bones through,

like they could teach the water

something about resistance. The boy

with the short-cut jeans and curly hair

splashes the flat of his hands

onto the ripples; I think maybe,

this is how the lines on his palms

will tell stories. *Splash!* - his face caught

in his mother’s tears. How she will

worry about him. I look down at my wet-

bitten trousers, throw the pebble

of my tongue in their direction.

*Hey! A nice day for fishing!*

It sinks after the second skip.

I want to say, *look into the mirror*

*of your future, see how your hair*

*has grown out of its curls, you*

*are standing in the life of your own eyes.*

*The stones and their weight,*

*sunk well beneath the stream*

*of your skin. You will lick the salt*

*off your own hands, early ocean.*

I dry my feet, unfurl my fists

and see a day that was good

for fishing. A line with no fish

to speak of.