

Jackleen Holton Hookway

SHE LAUGHS AT THUNDER

This morning, it was a piece of tangerine,
her eyes going wide when she tasted
the way it bit back a little. It's been a year
of firsts. Everyday newborn
as the day after rain.

A few weeks ago, she discovered
clapping, and now she brings her hands
together for everything; she claps sitting down,
standing up, laughing, crying, it's all worthy

of applause. And now, walking,
another thing that happened all at once;
one day, she just took off, darting across
the living room, arms out like rudders, turning
to navigate the coffee table,
the little motor of her going, going,

and clapping, clapping at herself, her sausage legs,
and clamshell feet, this sudden mastery.
Today, it rained, not the tiny sprinkles
she tasted last week, face upturned,
mouth open to collect all that cold delight.

It stormed. She stood by the screen door,
pressing her face against the mesh
as the lightning split the slate sky,
and after every thunderclap, she looked up,
wild with shrieks of laughter, brought
her little hands together,
and clapped back.