

NINE MONTHS
AFTER HIS BIRTH, I MEET
MY SON FOR THE FIRST
TIME

Lucas A. Street

as a person, not an experiment,
accomplishment, or part of my wife's

outfit. We leave the house
together. In the library children's room

he's entranced, not by the endless
volumes, not the goldfish in their tank,

his gaze fixed on something just above
—the hands of the clock. He stands

by yanking my pant leg,
widens his eyes to mimic speech:

loud, low pontifications
punctuated gurgles, what's left

of babyhood. Trying out consonants,
he ventures from safety,

listens to the book I read
an instant before grabbing. As if language

could be mastered the way he fingers
her lips, her chin. Could satisfy

his drooping eyes regarding me.
Could swell like the waves of him

outgrowing her arms, inching
toward mine.