

barred owl

B.J. BEST

somewhere in the forest lives a question.
ice cracks, wind whips, a child is putting
a bullfrog she caught into an old metal bucket.
one day you're growing out your hair,
the next day you're growing
old. you imagine an owl of silver
on an emperor's shelf. you count
the lightning bolts and lose track.
you think the winter is beautiful, the trees standing
naked and broken as saints, but
somewhere in the forest lives a question,
the answer locked like ice in its talons.