

ALISON TOUSTER-REED

Family Tree

She has her father's heavy eyes,
his flattened shoulders, and his thinwire
hair. The Mozart in her mother's fingers
is in her fingers too. It is the music
that has her running and running,
a happy creature who invents the gods.
Everywhere she goes, her parents fold like proteins
in her bones and fly up high
inside her eyes like leggy birds
with widening bursts of breath.

And her two children, her ball park
figures, fill her with their air.
They are the perfectly intended line
of her, and she looks to the grammar
of their motion for her immortality.
Like a saxophone's free-for-all
that scorches the air in stretching
alleys, all four of them last
and last in her, reflect her
like a turning songbird
with a hint of green. Every day
she lives in the long shadows
of their blue water which lightens her.