Sam Insists Only Oak

and they fill

a bowl on the table,

fill pockets of coats, the bottom of the diaper backpack He places the largest on the bathroom sink for safekeeping.

They are like a leather purse I bought a decade ago. \$200 from TJ Maxx
Two towns over. More than I've spent on a bag before or since. This was two weeks after my maple mother shed all over the bathroom sink. It was a poor consolation but a good purse.

Does my son choose oak because he is a better poet than I? His way of saying death doesn't have to be spectacle to matter, death can be brown and ordinary, but here I am, noticing?

He's two, so this is unlikely.
He chooses what he loves.
That is enough to make them matter.

Sam gives me an oak leaf

while I'm nursing Frankie,

and I hold it up to my eye. I have life in both hands.

The leaf is all feather and hole,

brown but orange, purple,

swirled together.

An imperfect fractal.

Ten fingers, curling, veins and arteries.

Later, my son puts his hand

inside of

mine.

We draw together, bare and glowing,

white

oil-pastel on black paper, oak trees

green zig-zags below, and then we hang

the moon on his wall without frame,

so the light leaks everywhere.