

1973

Old Snapshot

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OLD SNAPSHOT

The photo, small
and blurred and dark,
is amateurish:
her old back yard, a corner of the
since-abandoned house,
and centered distantly the rusty
childhood swing
the boy is sitting in, for spite,
because he didn't like to pose.
He looks awkwardly to where
she'd stood (her shadow cast
spectorially in the
foreground).

When had she put it here?
The novel where she's found it pressed
is sentimental, girlish.
Its characters seem dim and
far away,
like figures on a windy hillside.
Though not recalling how or why,
remembers that the novel's end
was sad.

The boy looks puzzled or resentful;
his face turned slightly watches her,
his look remote and unresolved.
Caught as an unexpected breeze
stirred up his hair.
The years have made him
unfamiliar.
How young he seems,
how strange it makes her feel
to think of having loved him.

Now hearing distantly
her younger daughter's call, she
lays the picture back.
The distant, boyish face stares out.
She leaves it there.
And shuts the book,
as if to mark her place.