

## THE PHOTOGRAPH

I want to hide in the folds of my mother's white shift  
before she was my mother.

The brocade around her neck is delicate as she was  
delicate once. In the photograph

she has the bright eyes of a kingfisher; the sepia tone  
doesn't show the ocean hazel color

but you can still see the shine. Her lips are parted  
and I cannot see the teeth though I know they were tiny

like mine, with a space that made her cover her mouth  
when she laughed, until father took her to a dentist

three weeks after their wedding, had them capped.  
I can almost see her small hand struggle to stretch an octave.

She looks twelve or thirteen next to the thin limbs  
of a pear tree. He was an older man.

She thought he would take care of her, take her  
away from the mother with the river of black hair,

the mother who held her love like a bright  
pear, red, on a branch out of reach.