

## Album

*for Bridget*

Carol captured Lynn being born and you naked and huge as a Buddah, your moon-face drained and not nearly as radiant as the pink sun of your belly, or dark as Lynn's wet head crowning. Later, I sat on your sofa a wall away from the birthing room while you examined the photos, narrated: "...and Gary couldn't stop shaking so Carol shot most..." Even then, the stark prints disturbed you, and now you have privatized them away like a diary.

The collected fragments, a montage of gestures: Lynn with her translucent skin like a Renaissance child, like her mother—in form, the way the body, the clear bluish eyes transform, absorb each vanishing point. You send your child in sepia, in fleshtones, and candidly for Christmas, in firelight. Not many of you or Gary now, only your daughter, asleep, awake, crushing the tabby, and here, splashing in the kitchen sink: a tiny nude with an open rose floated discreetly over her sex.

This summer Lynn plays by the Atlantic. It's Cape Cod in August. Advancing, you snap shot after shot to be developed in white and muted black. Your brilliant daughter runs the shore toward colonies of gulls, and you crouch, keep distance, the salt wind in your hair. Lynn scampers away as you squint, follow with your eyes, but from here she could be anyone's child, skirting an ocean, slipping down the beach and out of focus.

— Susan Wylie