

VERSE

MY MOTHER HAS A PHOTOGRAPH

my mother has a photograph in which
she sits on a balcony, sewing, my
dead brother plays in shorts, my sister
is in tresses with dolls. they are together.
it is before the bombing. they are
bathed in sunlight, forty years ago.

talk to my mother. she will show you
that picture like the happiness that comes once.
she lives there. she remembers it was when
God loved her most, after which she sinned horribly,
& the time never came again.

i grew up being shown that picture as a lesson.
it worked.

now it is you & i
taking snapshots, posing with
happiness like a trophy. the room
is bathed in light. the shutter clicks
& my heart leaps
to get out of focus.

-Pier Giorgio Dedicco