

RUTH PANOFSKY

## Evidence

The old home movie shows you  
newly married  
seated at a coffee table  
in an unidentified living-room  
you are laughing, sitting close  
on a couch, thighs touching  
intimately connected among strangers  
and you are pregnant

When I first glimpse this image  
I insist on replaying it  
I am mesmerized by your youth  
and the joy on your faces  
the pleasure I see on the screen  
astonishes me  
it is not a feeling I associate with parents  
who I know as stern, troubled, and responsible

But here  
captured on celluloid  
is a moment in your young lives  
when you knew happiness  
and anticipated great things:  
the birth of your first child  
increasing good fortune  
years of companionship that lay ahead  
uncharted and hopeful

And as I watch  
I am seized by a fierce desire  
to freeze the image  
of my lovely, youthful mother  
my handsome, sanguine father  
whose expressions foretell a  
future of possibility  
an image that  
reveals an intense love I rarely saw  
as a child and later  
an image I find sad  
but somehow reassuring  
it tells me  
that once, at least  
there was love  
there was hope