

THE UNRESOLVED SNAPSHOT

Christianne Balk

The two girls, caught shrugging
Just as the shutter snapped,
Have brown, furry spots
Where their eyes should be.
Their mouths have no openings.
They are shadowy and soft
As if half-dissolved into each other,
They lean toward their father,
Whose arms and shoulders
Surround them like a doorjamb.
Two cloth overnight bags sit
Hunched over on the sidewalk.
Today is the last day of July,
The day the girls go back

To their mother's house.
Their father's face seemed seered
By smalt-colored streaks
Thrown, in lines, from the trees.
His hair is trampled flat,
Springing up in patches
To poke angry fingers
At the beryl sky,
The livid sky which hangs
Above the three of them.
Behind them, the street tips.
Cars, trees, and houses sit angled,
Askew with the foreground,
Barely balanced on the slope.