

Adult Highly Commended

David Copson

The Family Album

Look, here is a silly hat, a toothy smile,
a tongue sticking out, bunny-ear fingers;
a happy child. And here is the beach we played upon:
sand castles, waves you can almost hear; sea breezes,
yellow windbreaks. Each year we grew, as you can see:
my brother, the dog, and me. And radiating still mum's
loving smile, dad's attentive glance; the background
out-of-focus, the fun in front of us. Further in are
grandma and granddad, the old brown dog; runner beans
and sweet peas, our young mum balancing on a
slippery log. And those cars: chrome bumpers, pop-out
winkers, leather seats, whitewall tyres; somewhere
in the distance three faint spires. And here stands great
granddad: round glasses, a pocket chain, a Jack Russell
looking sideways, bunting reflected in a pane, but
colourless - well, monochrome - ageless but aged.
Now here's one I remember, when Carol and I got engaged.
Those trousers, that frilly shirt, that unbelievably short skirt!
And the snaps friends took. The big day. Our black and white
in colour, the family leaning a certain way. And there, my
Mini car, still small, outside a terrace with a redbrick wall.
I fold the album shut, the yellowed leaves contain so much:
we're close in here; we stay in touch. Safe as houses,
love is our wealth; we're all together on a bookcase shelf.