HEATHER MCPHERSON

Forgiving our father (iv)
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**Forgiving our father**

(iv)

They were charming, the old ladies on the boardinghouse verandah the time my father threw me out...

‘Yes yes you must, O do go to university, It was the most fun I ever had...sliding down bannisters, ankle-length skirts flying...bumping on silver teatrays down the stairs...’

‘...and the professor wouldn’t call us Ladies because, he said, if you’re in my laboratory you’re not...’

‘...and my fiancé killed in the Great War...’ and ‘there’s only one war, the one you’re born in, the one you live through...’

and shyly I offer up Great-Uncle Frank shell-shocked and deaf from the Somme but knots in my head rang clamorous night sirens steamy railway stations and those bald fascisti skulls like Michelangelo domes all over Rome

and the gas mask in the toybox and jungle boots on the back porch and my father limping down the hall

Do you only ever fight one World War is it the same does ordinary old war go on unstoppably

I finger her kindly sub-text

how before and after resistances the wise ones will prompt you into what to hold onto

*October, 2011*