

## *Mother's Skeleton*

AUDREY DOIRE

I was sixteen when she  
told me I wasn't her first.  
She had shared her body  
with another seven years  
before me.

It was on one of those  
days when her tongue  
was quicker than her  
mind, telling me of the  
brother I'll never know.

Brother.  
That word hung in the  
beer-drenched air, waiting  
for me to grab it. But I  
didn't dare. I pet the dog  
instead.

Eyes glazed I watched  
her lips continue to move  
but couldn't hear their  
sound. Tears had flooded  
my eardrums.

The dog licked my face  
and tilted his head to one  
side, looking as though  
he too knew everything  
had changed.