

## *Probably*

FRANCINE WITTE

That summer was knobby  
and loose-skinned like the knuckles  
of a tired old man. My father  
had up and left us. Walked out  
after dinner and became part  
of the dark. My mother bent  
into herself, baby-like, never  
quite straightening up. The sky  
unloaded the same rain each day  
at 3 o'clock. Up went the silly  
umbrellas that didn't keep anything  
dry. The lines on my mother's face  
grew deeper and pain glowed through  
her like radium.

And probably,  
my father was holed up in a cheap motel,  
flickering vacancy sign. He might have been  
reading the newspaper, circling the want  
ads or ads for a whole new family.  
Later he might have looked out  
the window, bloodshot sunset  
across the motel court and later  
still, most likely, sitting alone, he was  
probably drinking a toast to himself.