

Camera Obscura

Camera Obscura

Warm I suppose that day
since we are summer-dressed
in hand-me-downs,
sockless in T-bar sandals.

Twelve of us, a staggered cousin-ladder,
bowl haircuts framing the family face –
gap-toothed grins, wide foreheads,
ruddy cheeks of our peasant forbears,
all caught on the cusp of fifties optimism.
Locked in our genes lie
poets, musicians, doctors, scientists,
lovers, clowns.
Golden children, we will fly to the sun,
hold the moon in our hands.

The camera doesn't see
the sly, stalking ghosts –
depression, addiction, anger
haunting through centuries.
It sees the one who will live alone,
longing at seventy for death to claim her,
the girl who crouches Haka-like,
unaware of her crippled future,
the eldest, cradling a toddler,
dreaming of her own, hoping for five,
destined for none.

It records the dancer,
the banker, the nun ...

... and the chubby, thoughtful one,
last to arrive,
who will be first to go.

Line Count: 30