

MARGARET SCOTT

FAMILY PORTRAIT

It does not seem long ago that I understood
The different pitch of a cry.
Later there were stories, beaches, Christmas
So it seemed my children and I
Would always talk to each other
Or understand completely a need for silence.
But quietly doors closed.
Behind them we changed to strangers
Who meet, if at all, only to posture and row
Because the music is too loud
And the utopias seem haunted by Alistair Crowley,
Because reason has become an impediment
To knowing anything
And the gurus live too high in America,
Because shop-lifting seems a less than constructive protest
And I only polish the knobs on the doors of perception
Or serve dead cow, not soya beans, for lunch.
Even our memories smell of patchouli oil.
The better times have shrunk to single days.
Isolated and dry, they rattle in a cupped hand
Like the seeds of the present,
Like brown rice.