

JOHN BLIGHT

FRANCESCA'S DAUGHTER

I knew your mother, Palla —
she who looked at me, as night
that furnishes the day with
soothing for tired limbs. Love
was a habit which she wore. I
loosened into a ready
couch her garments that were shadows
strewn in prime abandon round
a room, tidied by day to
appease my sickly presence.

I looked askance at her each
noon. I knew her only at
convenient hours. Why do
you flaunt before me in the
daylight your mother's shape, her
form of maidenhood?

I fear for you; but mostly fear
the years that reproduce her
beauty while I age.

I peer
in the mirror of day and
see my face, my soul uglier
than the blackest pitch of night.
Will she send her daughter's
daughter finally to wrap
me in the darkness of her brow?