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The Photograph

Marie Campbell

Colorado Christian University

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About the Contributor (Optional)

Marie Campbell was homeschooled through high school and is now an English major at Colorado Christian University. She enjoys singing, acting, playing the flute, snowbarding, and scrapbooking. She hopes to someday publish historical fiction for children.

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Marie Campell

THE PHOTOGRAPH

I saw two children standing near a well, Father and Uncle
In a photograph all yellow-brown; Hard to tell
Who held the bucket, whose kite peeked from the shrubs.
Uncle, I think, wore the freckles and the missing sock.

Strange to see that frosty dawn like bird-prints on a bank:
One splash less in the creek, one sip more of Grandma's tea,
One breath longer by the fire—it might be Father's name instead,
Etched in stone, fog and spirits drifting past his bed.

Uncle might be cuffing Father's dog, smoking Father's cigarettes—
Or holding back the fist, perhaps, that broke the boss' jaw.
Signing Father's checks, a muscled back by Mother in the pew,
Her forehead smooth, no shouts against the bedroom door,
Long division in a deeper voice, maybe just one "A"

Strange to see two faded faces under matching caps,
Boys and brothers thirteen months before the swim,
And wonder: if it hadn't, what would be?