

## *FAMILY PORTRAIT*

I see you, poised in a blue sweater  
behind a vase of fresh carnations. Your boy  
mugs the camera. Behind his exaggerated smile  
he knows the promise of your nourishment  
for a few more years as your arm  
gently turns him into you. The lens  
catches your unanswered eyes  
and a befuddled dog quivers  
in your lap. Your lips  
hold firm to resolutions  
made in old suicide notes  
to an abandoned husband you feared  
and never miss in labors of mother.  
You sit confident that no man will take away  
what you have taken back  
and that no pain will cripple you  
by any hand other than your own.

Tom Miller