

Francis Coke

MY DAUGHTER GROWS UP



Silence stretches out on
a dusty window sill
where a father's laughter lived;
where life's trappings linger, until

she culls them gently one
by one into a swollen bag,
leaving spaces clean between
the dust. Her shoulders sag

with tired disbelief.
She leans against the door
emptying his smell
in bottles on the floor
littered with the clearing
of what used to be assurance.
A salty bubble welling,
she turns to meet my glance.

Her eyes are older now;
Her face no longer wears
unsullied hope. The woman
in her steadies. She bears
her loss with grace, doing
what she must; fingering
a smudgy photograph,

another time, enduring.