

## Photograph

My father and I play checkers  
In profile.  
He sits on the couch, leans forward on his elbow, there's  
A low coffee table between us.  
I am four, sit opposite on a hassock.  
He concentrates on the board,  
I am watching him, who  
Is winning?  
I no longer know  
The rules or object of the game  
Checkers on the board and off  
An open cigarette package, box of matches  
My father wears a loose white  
Shirt, work pants, my hair  
Is badly cut, these  
Are the details. Beyond the barely furnished room I guess snow:  
Banked against the front and back doors. Years later  
We'll live in another city.  
In an old farmhouse  
Rock at the green edge  
Of a golf course. My father  
Will pull a stove out of a wall  
And hurl it across a kitchen  
On my account  
Boiling lobsters  
Will fly like wet birds.  
In this photograph my face  
Tilts up toward his. I wait for him to make his move  
And I would gladly wait forever,  
Deaf to the screams, and scarlet tails  
That will one day scatter.

– Patricia Young (1958)