

EMMANUELLE VIVIER

Looking Back

Looking back from a distance of many years
I try to find something unusual about that day
but we had no premonition, no vague feeling
no chill in our bones
not a dark cloud in the cruelly blue sky
How ridiculously simple and easy that day was
How helpful a presage would have been
How differently we might have done things

Papa had come from Paris to visit our new house
We had set the stage for a night of celebrations
effervescent champagne ready to explode
crystal flutes about to chime
candles here and there
jazz music floating in the air

The call came from France
a familiar voice telling me to sit down
There had been an accident
our little brother was dead
golden bubbles collapsed in crystal
candles blown out one by one
the scent of church
in the silent house

I found Papa standing in the dark hallway
teetering on the edge of comprehension
I knew every one of my ominous words
would pierce his heart like a bullet

I had never held a weapon before
my hands were shaking
I spoke
He fell