

Mother

used to call me an itch
made monstrous
statements about my
Hapsburg chin. In religious life
I was Father Joachim. she delighted
in her interpretation: "My son, Joa-chin"

My brother Joe was a sloth, an orangutan
hippopotamus, rhinoceros, more intimately,
a horned-rim jackass. Joe would say,
"Oh, mother you love me so." She'd laugh.

As a young girl amidst filigree and
ornate chandeliers at a Washington DC ball
flipped off a gentleman's toupee in a dare.
She said she always regretted that
(Sometimes I wonder).

In the ambiance of fine linen, cut glass
sterling silver luncheon for well to do ladies
my aunt asked her: "Eda, will you say grace?"
All the women bowed their heads as my mother said,
"Dear God, forgive me for eating with all these Protestants"

She orchestrated a bustling, welcoming Inn
read Maughmn, duMaupassant, Ellery Queen, wintered in France
summered in Wales, her needlepoint won prizes at country fairs
took no prisoners at pinochle and bridge. Embarrassed us
drove us nuts, made us furiously mad.
The day she died we were lost.

Dick Brugger
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