



**Junctures**  
The Journal for Thematic Dialogue

**14: peace**

July 2011

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HEATHER MCPHERSON

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***Forgiving our father (iv)***

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HEATHER MCPHERSON

***Forgiving our father***

**(iv)**

They were charming, the old ladies  
on the boardinghouse verandah  
the time my father threw me out...

'Yes yes you must, O do go to university,  
It was the most fun I ever had...sliding  
down bannisters, ankle-length  
skirts flying...bumping on silver  
teatrays down the stairs...'

'...and the professor wouldn't call us  
Ladies because, he said, if you're in  
my laboratory you're not...'

'...and my fiancé killed in the Great  
War...' and 'there's only one war, the one  
you're born in, the one you live through...'

and shyly I offer up Great-Uncle Frank  
shell-shocked and deaf from the Somme  
but knots in my head rang clamorous

night sirens steamy railway stations and those  
bald fascisti skulls like Michelangelo  
domes all over Rome

and the gas mask in the toybox and jungle  
boots on the back porch and my father  
limping down the hall

Do you only ever fight one World  
War is it the same does ordinary old  
war go on unstoppably

I finger her kindly sub-text

how before and after resistances  
the wise ones will prompt you

into what to hold onto

*October, 2011*