

## Casehistory: Alison (head injury)

*(She looks at her photograph)*

I would like to have known  
My husband's wife, my mother's only daughter.  
A bright girl she was.

Enmeshed in comforting  
5 Fat, I wonder at her delicate angles.  
Her autocratic knee

Like a Degas dancer's  
Adjusts to the observer with airy poise,  
That now lugs me upstairs

10 Hardly. Her face, broken  
By nothing sharper than smiles, holds in its smiles  
What I have forgotten.

She knows my father's dead,  
And grieves for it, and smiles. She has digested  
15 Mourning. Her smile shows it.

I, who need reminding  
Every morning, shall never get over what  
I do not remember.

Consistency matters.  
20 I should like to keep faith with her lack of faith,  
But forget her reasons.

Proud of this younger self,  
I assert her achievements, her A levels,  
Her job with a future.

25 Poor clever girl! I know,  
For all my damaged brain, something she doesn't:  
I am her future.

A bright girl she was.

U. A. FANTHORPE  
1929–2009

LITERARY  
HERITAGE