

I'm not sure what my mother **was after** but she loved Sonny and my father was **heartbroken** ... **Ethan and I** went **back and forth for a while** ... it was **around then that** that photograph **was taken, the one** I found in my mother's bedroom after she was **rushed** to the hospital ... she's **dressed up**, yellow lapel point flaring out over a black dress ... Sonny **is wearing** a tan suit ... it's my mother's favorite photo from those **days**

how old was I there? thirty? ... I was three **months pregnant with** David ... I remember how good **I felt** ... also, I remember how much I **missed feeling** like that, enjoying **things, just, you know, being** in love ... we **used to go** to the Nature's Center ... and then I **would be coming down** the walk and you guys **would** jump out at me **trying** to scare me -- I remember **THAT** ... I remember just **doing** that always, **like** in the **grocery store** and **wherever**

someone recently asked me if I love my mother and I **realized I actually** had to think about it. **I do**, of course but **for** months, **I've seen** her only as a **set** of problems ... it's hard to remember the **person** my mother once was, when she **enrolled in** Cornell **at** 16, **spoke** French, got **a master's degree** ... when she was lucid, I still **liked hearing** her stories **about growing** up with my grandparents and their **exploits** in pre-war Palestine ... since she was always **intensely** political ... I **haven't** seen much of that old **self** on this trip to Florida

one evening I took my mother **to** dinner **at** Red Lobster ... it **must have put her in** some kind of good mood ... while we were **going over** the menu she **starts telling** me some story ... a **tiny** episode of my childhood, a little **glimpse of what it was like** ... I can't **even** remember what **it was other than** it flattened me with the sudden **overwhelming** realization that this person across from me actually **IS** my mother ... if **things had been different** we **could have been getting** dinner together like normal people ... right there, my mother tries to **comfort** me like mothers do, for the first time **in as long as I can remember** ... **I wish things were different** — I wish **they were,**
too