

WOODALE ROAD

The house we moved into when I was two years old was built the year I was born. The contractor's name was William Stroud. I looked him up—he died years and years ago. Who was he? I can't find a picture. It is so important to get the material objects right this time. The bones of the feet. You have no idea how important it is to get the material objects right! When my parents bought the house we moved into when I was two years old they didn't know they'd still be living in it forty years later. They didn't know my father would have the stroke in that house that would eventually kill him, or that I'd return to it with my week-old daughter to clear away the mess and oversee the sale. It was supposed to be what's called a starter home. All the houses on Woodale Road were thought of as starter homes by the families living in them. The war was over! Green, green the grass of the Eastern Suburb, and amid the grass a road that led to the top of the hill. The women were busy having children, the men were busy having jobs. Often, arising, I can remember how it was. Looking across Woodale and down the driveway between the Abelsons and the Kings. Between numbers 26 and 28 the macadam sparkled. It wavered, and up close next to the Kings' front door someone had planted a mountain ash, also called a rowan tree, the shadow it cast on the macadam a sad place to get stuck in like an eddy on a river when you weren't paying attention, something that could happen in a lifetime more than once. "I can't believe Miss King was ever young," Henry Lee said. "I can't believe we'll ever be that old," Ellen Abelson replied.