

## To tell the truth

When I was young, I wondered why  
grown-ups lied.

Why? There was no reason to  
(that I could see),  
but then it was not at least  
for another 30 years  
that I became sophisticated.

I pondered this just now,  
(on my third small glass of port  
and at least one sheet to the wind)  
watching young Olivia,  
not yet three but getting there  
and fresh and true enough  
to frolic nude without a second thought.

No doubt sophistication,  
civilisation, socialisation  
(or whatever fancy name  
we use to flatter it)  
will soon discover her,  
and young Olivia will then also lie.

But while she is still young  
her lies will be slight and honest,

involving none of that admirable complexity  
that honour educated, adult mendacity.

I do not doubt she has already told a lie or five  
in her almost three years,  
but these are innocent, unplanned  
transparent lies  
and are not even lies  
unless she knows just what it means to lie.  
And that she doesn't (yet).

But she will learn. We all soon learn.

What is not clear, what was never clear,  
what I have never learned  
(and I am now no longer almost three)  
is just why, why, why, why do adults lie?