

Wendy Sloan

Requiem

Sad little face, sad little face
is looking up at me.
I kiss your lips but can't erase
your longing to be free,
free from the torment your eyes trace
of life's last cruelty.

It cannot be. No, it must be.
The man I knew is gone.
Still, we meet here in elegy
who met in love so long,
catching your soul's epiphany
in the cadence of a song.

For you are dead. No, you're not dead,
for still you linger on,
a limbo life-in-death instead —
macabre marathon —
and you will languish in your bed
until you're truly gone.

Now, as I kiss your cheek, you wake
and turn to look at me,
and for a moment I mistake
the visage that I see —
that squinting grimace that you make,
it's how you used to be!

And I am living with a ghost,
your shadow hovers near,
and all that we've already lost
is all we hold most dear,
and what I'm longing for the most
is what I mostly fear.

So I bear witness to your strain,
your grim prolonged decline.
As hours drift into weeks again
I hold your hand in mine.
But as hours drift into weeks again
and I bend to kiss your lips again
your shadow is sealed in love's refrain
as if in amber resin.