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Echoes

Robert Dinges Jr.

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Robert Dinges, Jr.

Smile

I buried my mother
in a hospital bed
A crank at one end
propped her up
for visitation
and back down again
when we wanted to pretend
she was asleep.
She slowly sank
to become one
with the mattress,
ashes to ashes,
cloth to cloth.
We wait for her lips
to form a word of protest,
anything but that same
shy unwary smile.

Echoes

We speak to each
other through TV's
mutter, a soft
formless base on
which we walk
barefoot, stub toes
on dog's yaps,
avoid sharp claws
from cat's querying
yowls, feel through
a steady noise
while night oozes
from shadows, our
shared pain
in an empty house.