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| **Facing It** |
| by Yusef Komunyakaa |
| My black face fades,  hiding inside the black granite.  I said I wouldn't,  dammit: No tears.  I'm stone. I'm flesh.  My clouded reflection eyes me  like a bird of prey, the profile of night  slanted against morning. I turn  this way--the stone lets me go.  I turn that way--I'm inside  the Vietnam Veterans Memorial  again, depending on the light  to make a difference.  I go down the 58,022 names,  half-expecting to find  my own in letters like smoke.  I touch the name Andrew Johnson;  I see the booby trap's white flash.  Names shimmer on a woman's blouse  but when she walks away  the names stay on the wall.  Brushstrokes flash, a red bird's  wings cutting across my stare.  The sky. A plane in the sky.  A white vet's image floats  closer to me, then his pale eyes  look through mine. I'm a window.  He's lost his right arm  inside the stone. In the black mirror  a woman's trying to erase names:  No, she's brushing a boy's hair. |

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