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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 melike a bird of prey, the profile of nightslanted against morning. I turnthis way--the stone lets me go.I turn that way--I'm insidethe Vietnam Veterans Memorialagain, depending on the lightto make a difference.I go down the 58,022 names,half-expecting to findmy 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 blousebut when she walks awaythe 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 floatscloser to me, then his pale eyeslook through mine. I'm a window.He's lost his right arminside the stone. In the black mirrora woman's trying to erase names:No, she's brushing a boy's hair. |

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