

**Wilderness House Literary Review 5/4**

*Robert K. Johnson*

**MY MEMORY IS NO LONGER**

a loyal lackey  
ready to respond

to my command,  
but a capricious flirt

who might, if I asked,  
cuddle close to me,

but is just as likely  
to flit--laughing--from the room,

then reappear  
an hour or two later

and, if in the mood,  
whisper in my ear

the name or date  
I'm still trying to remember.

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### HELPLESS

Twenty years  
later,  
    I still  
can't forget when--

paler than the pillow  
on her hospital bed--  
my mother, too weak

to lift a spoon,  
pleaded with me  
to help her walk  
out of the room

she knew  
    death  
was ready to enter.

SOMETHING YOU RECOGNIZE

More than  
a pair of eyes  
bare of all guile,

more than a smile  
that makes you--  
helplessly!--think

of sunlight:  
    it's the glow  
hovering in the face

of someone  
    pristine  
with first-love

that awakens your past,  
and hurts you  
with joy and sadness.