

I remember Janice

I'd wake in the morning,
Intending to go next door
And play with Janice for a while

Then I'd remember, Janice is gone.
She died when she was thirteen
Of a brain tumor.

I remember Janice
Her pudgy arms holding
Tight to Teddy Bear.

I remember Janice
An attic room full
Of books and toys
And secret doors.

I remember Janice
Dressed as a ghost
At Halloween, as we
Gloated over candy.

I remember Janice,
Rushing to my house
When my brother came
To tell his scary stories.

I remember Janice
When we crept into the cellar
And marveled at her father's
Incredible Lionel train set.

I remember Janice
Twirling her baton,
Determined to be a cheerleader
When she grew up.

I remember Janice
A prodigy on the piano
A young scholar of promise
Who never grew up.

I remember Janice
Who stopped growing at nine
Wondering why she was
So behind the other girls.

I remember Janice
Absent from her home again
And again.
Another operation

I remember Janice
Pale, wan, and cold
Attending her sister's wedding
A dark coat on a spring day.

I remember Janice, the last
Time in October. There
Would be no trick of treat.

I remember going to Janice's house,
Her father sitting on the back steps,
His head in his hands,
"It's over."

For years, I'd wake in the morning,
Intending to go next door
And play with Janice for a while

Then I'd remember, Janice is gone.

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