

1863 *Candid*

WENDY SMITH-STENHOUSE

If I could
I would ask you why
you looked away
when the flash chiseled pewter eyes
into the granite of your comrades.

Another lifeless monument.
Good soldiers
muskets aligned
flat steel faces
speaking only of duty.
Sepia under glass.

I would ask you why
you smiled
and let your bayonet lean
Destroying the Line!

Allowing me through
to smell the wool of your coat
to feel your flesh
and to ache
with the throbbing of my own imaginings.