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## Concentrating on Photographs: the Vatican

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*Greg Glazner*

## **Concentrating on Photographs: The Vatican**

On folds of cloth, in sunlight,  
I am alive, awaiting the miracle  
of modern aspirin. I am remembering

the painless way daylight fell  
for hours to a marble floor,  
the way voices diffused and rang

inside the chambers. I can almost see  
the Pieta. And though sponged with booze,  
side splitting with vice, I don't in the least

resemble the Christ of Michaelangelo,  
though he has died and I have simply  
failed to live, a cowering atheist among women,

a drone ten years at work, though it's pitiful,  
a child's fantasy, I know how it would feel  
to lie back in the Mother's arms

to have those eyes look down so tenderly  
all failure wouldn't matter, as if mercy  
poured forth from the chiseled rock,

white sky, round stars in a perfect  
human face. But the pain is slowly  
resurrecting, and the Italian crowd is shifting,

dredging up the burning issue of our time—  
pleasure— and whatever vision might have sated me  
decays into the luxurious flesh

of the figures, into rippling stone composed  
in ordinary space. And with the click  
of a camera's shutter, it's over,

a wishful, full-color myth recalled  
from a sickbed, labeled with the year  
of hostages, of failed international pacts,

the year our modern hero—  
madman, deconstructionist—  
took a hammer to the Virgin's face.