

**A SMILE GOT LEFT BEHIND**

She lost all interest in staying alive  
When staying alive became  
The sole purpose of living.

She wasn't depressed, just curious,  
And wondered why, without having  
An object, reason, or goal,  
Living should become meaningless.

Of course, she reasoned, meaning  
Was only on the *visible* side of life,  
The part of *living* that can be  
Blind, mute, and paralyzed.

She looked forward to invisible living,  
And smiled—the only movement she had.

Visiting family often wondered  
    At her perpetual sweet smile,  
        At her relaxed body, and  
            At the unexplained exaltation they felt  
                After they sat beside her a while.

Two cousins, who had played imaginary games with her,  
Stopped by often and enjoyed talking  
Back and forth across her bed, absorbing her Peace.

They asked her questions, and listened to her silent answers.  
They understood—like when they were children—and that gave them comfort.

Before they left, they always kissed her on the mouth  
And remembered that comforting smile.

