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my 256th picture day

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my 256th picture day

you think that i enjoy calling you
superstar, princess, or petunia
when everyone is a superstar, princess, or petunia?
or that i enjoy tilting and turning
your little head
to get it at just the right angle?
how much patience does it require
to
sit
still
for
fifteen
seconds?

but i have almost forgotten...

your fifteen seconds lasts a day.
you probably want your picture to be taken
and over with. well i am over with
so don't hurry the time it takes
to capture you picture perfect.
so perfect there upon that box,
an unblemished history,
an ability to fly kites believing they can never go high enough,
the only monsters you know are the ones under your bed,
candy still gives you that sugar high,
the clouds in your sky are dragons and steamboats,
the moving gleam of curiosity and uninhibited emotion
that i caught in your eye
before you left the rushed excited happy giddy chatter
with your friends that are still waiting on line.
torn from your companions,
you dread this one picture-
try taking this picture
over
and
over
and
over

again.
they're all the same.

if you can't hold that forced smile for a couple moments now,
how will you be able to plaster it on
for days weeks months years at a time?

as the light flashes ensuring that your face will be frozen forever,
perhaps you'd like to take a peek and look through my lens.

by Claudine Mead