



11-15-2004

Pentimento

Julia Wendell

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview>

Recommended Citation

Wendell, Julia (2004) "Pentimento," *Westview*: Vol. 24 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol24/iss1/13>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.

Pentimento

by Julia Wendell

Weeks later, the dog comes back
from a prowl with a head
in the platter of its mouth,
wiggling and wagging
with its newfound trophy.
There's not much left—
a matted patch of tabby, the small, white
triangular ears—just enough to know

it's her, so we can stop
filling in the blanks
of a better outcome.
Not knowing
is an open door
through which
anything can pass.

Which is why, years ago,
when I phoned my mother
with more bad news—
abortion or divorce—
she hung up on me.
Not knowing
was her blank canvas,
her masterpiece of safety.

I'd wanted
to tell my kids:
Farms are hard on cats,
and this looks like
a fox's work; the head snapped
off, the body gone, the eyes
left pretty much intact.
But the mother in me
that came from another
like and unlike me thought, even so,
some things are better left unsaid.

