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## RONNIE R. BROWN

### FOCUS

Even in sleep  
her mind can't  
settle. Like that myth  
about life flashing  
before the eyes of the near  
dead, she reviews  
her past. Errors, mis-  
cues, misdeeds lingering far  
longer  
than needed to reinforce  
their point. As morning  
nears, things speed up,  
images shift, blur in  
and out of focus as if  
she were in the optometrist's  
chair  
the lenses flipping, as  
someone  
asks, "Is this one  
clear? How about  
this one? Now let's try  
another. Is that better?  
Worse?" *The pulsing*  
buzz of the alarm brings her  
to her feet. Standing before  
she's fully awake,  
she pauses, waits  
for the room to solidify, for  
her now-open eyes to adapt  
to  
her terminal prescription.

Ronnie R. Brown was the 2001 winner of the Ray Burrell Prize for poetry and her third collection of poetry, *Photographic Evidence*, was short-listed for the Archibald Lampman Award. Her fourth collection, *States of Matter*, will be published by Black Moss in 2005.