To Be on TV

Loudon Wainwright III

When you turn the TV off perhaps you are aware
Of a presence on the screen, a figure in a chair
Ghost like in living monochrome, a spectre sitting there
Stilled life like a picture painted by Vermeer
(Painted by Vermeer)

You're haunted by this figure, yet you are not afraid
It feels so familiar doubts and fears are allayed
A reassuring presence, thoughtful, rather staid
Expressing a calm kindness, a figment your mind made
(This figment your mind made)

Is this thing in mourning, shrouded there in gloom?
Buried in obscurity, living in a tomb?
Some sort of a strange sonogram, an image of a womb?
Or simply your reflection sitting in a room?
(Sitting in a room)

At the back a window, off to one side, a bed
Upon the wall a photo of a loved one, dead
Besides the chair a floor lamp shines light around its head
No, it's not a ghost at all, it's an angel instead
(An angel instead)

And when you turn the box back on perhaps now you will see
It's not about survival or reality
We're desperate to be captured, afraid to be free
Everybody's dying to be on TV
(To be on TV)

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