

Poet Zachary Schomburg:

*“Stabat Mater is a deeply simple and moving poem-film that stares right into the profound loss brought on by a refracted, reframed and repeated self-gaze. 15 times, the camera retreats —instead of moving toward, significantly —from a captured private moment of intimacy and desire into the world outside of the painting, which is one of gaze, questioning, judgment, reckoning. It reframes and refracts that moment, a memory, in 15 new ways. If Mary’s suffering of her son’s crucifixion is to be found in the film, it’s not a suffering that can just be found in the moment of the painting, but a suffering in the looking back at the moment, captured presumably first in a photograph, then in a painting, then a moment on the family’s video camera, then as found footage for this film. With each of the 15 retreats, there’s a new opportunity to re-read new meaning from the woman’s expression—desire, loneliness, boredom, trauma.*

*The conversation between the ex and their daughter is the film’s only poetic text, a found*

*poem, that slowly gets smaller, obscures less of (or differently) the woman's body—another kind of retreat. Because the conversation is removed from its larger context, the pronoun "they" in the last line has no obvious reference, leaving us to consider multiple paintings, maybe in a series, or something else. Who or what is they? And why would they be*

*thrown away? It reminds us that when a thing takes so much time to become itself—a long relationship, a realist painting, a savior —there's that more suffering when it's thrown away. It's really the "why" of that last question that haunts, and question that has no answer, other than to be asked ad infinitum."*