



NOV 2019

PUZZLE OF MOTHERHOOD

Mir-Yashar Seyedbagheri

On Mother's Day, my older sister Nancy and I put together a jigsaw puzzle. It was of a mother. We needed a respite from our Mother's Day habits of drinking. Dissecting our perceived flaws. Flaws our mother once illuminated. Needy, senseless dreamers. Odd beings.

We assembled pieces with tenderness. The mother on the box offered solace. We searched for hair, eyes. Hands. We didn't know what a real mother looked like.

When we completed it, she looked haunted, angry. We disassembled the puzzle, went back to drinking. It was easier to fuck things up.

Art by Kateryna Bortsova



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I ADD

Susan G. Duncan

eye of newt
toe of frog
bat's wool
and dog's tongue
to the Target app

we're in powerful trouble here

it's not enough to curse:
follow the recipe
call forth the ghosts
end this hell-bent tale.

Photo: "Pumpkinhead" by Lydia Armstrong



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IMPLIED

Austin Alexis

The birthday party was for her. She sat in the backyard wicker chair, enthroned. She began to refer to herself in the past tense: “My husband was always there for me.” She started to predict her friends’ futures: “Margaret will become a well-known playwright.” She held herself very still, as an opera singer might, just before performing an aria composed especially for her. She thanked her audience with her eyes. While speaking and while listening, an amused melancholy streamed from her. Thus, we understood this would be her last party, her final July, her summer of departure

*Photo: “To Infinity and Beyond”
by Taylor Still-Pepper*

Mir-Yashar is a graduate of Colorado State's MFA program in fiction. The recipient of two Honorable Mentions from Glimmer Train, Mir-Yashar has also had work nominated for The Best Small Fictions. His work has been published or is forthcoming in journals such as *Terror House Magazine*, *Scarlet Leaf Review*, *Ariel Chart*, and *50 Word Stories*. He lives in Garden Valley, Idaho.

At present time, **Kateryna Bortsova** is a painter – graphic artist with BFA in graphic arts, and an MFA. Works of Kateryna took part in many international exhibitions (Taiwan, Moscow, Munich, Spain, Macedonia, Budapest etc.). She has also won a silver medal in the category “Realism” in participation in “Factory of visual art,” New York, USA, and 2015 Emirates Skywards Art of Travel competition, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Susan G. Duncan is presently an independent consultant with a performing and visual arts clientele, capping a long career in arts administration. She served as executive director for San Francisco's long-running musical comedy phenomenon Beach Blanket Babylon, the al fresco California Shakespeare Theater, and the Grammy-winning, all-male vocal ensemble Chanticleer.

Her poetry has appeared in *Atlanta Review*, *Blast Furnace*, *Compass Rose*, *G.W. Review*, *Iodine Poetry Journal*, *The MacGuffin*, *NonBinary Review's* online feature, *Alphanumeric*, *OmniArts*, *Poem*, *The Quotable*, *River Oak Review*, *Skive Magazine*, *Soundings East*, *Thema*, and *The Yalobusha Review*, as well as anthologies by Red Claw Press and The Poetry Box.

Lydia Armstrong's work has appeared in *The Best Small Fictions 2017*, *Pamplermousse*, *Porter House Review*, and others. Her portrait photography project, *Thicket of Trash*, explores

positive self-image in the age of the selfie and challenges stigmas surrounding societal expectations, vanity, and sexuality. She lives in Richmond, Virginia, where she is currently working on a novel. More about Lydia can be found at www.thicketoftrash.com.

Austin Alexis has published fiction and poetry in a variety of journals including *Barrow Street*, *The Journal* and *The Pedestal Magazine*, and in anthologies, including *Rabbit Ears: TV Poems*. He has work forthcoming in *Poetica Review* (UK). His full-length poetry collection is *Privacy Issues* (Broadside Lotus Press, 2014), and he has two previously published chapbooks from Poets Wear Prada Press.

Taylor Still-Pepper is majoring in Visual Communication at West Liberty University. She is very passionate about images she captures behind the lens. She believes it's not what you see, but what you experience that makes the image.