

#FemkuMag



#24

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An e-zine of Womxn's Haiku

May 2020

issue 24

Guest Editor: Julie Bloss Kelsey

Editor-in-Chief: Lori A Minor

Cover art: Julie Bloss Kelsey, adapted from a NASA image

Editor's Note

As this month's guest editor, in honor of Mother's Day, I wanted to explore maternal, non-male intergenerational dynamics. Wow, did you deliver! I was truly amazed and humbled by the quality of your writing as well as the depth and range of emotion expressed in your submissions.

Thank you to everyone who submitted this month for entrusting me with such personal, heartfelt pieces. I feel blessed in knowing that I had a tiny part in bringing them to life.

I hope you enjoy my selections.

Sincerely,

Julie Bloss Kelsey

this aging face

*each day
I see more
of my mother*

*and less
of me*

Cynthia Anderson

*look into the mirror
great-grandma
smiles back*

Deborah Karl-Brandt

*following
in mom's footsteps -
radiation therapy*

Roberta Beach Jacobson

*family garden
three generations
of bleeding hearts*

Sarah E. Metzler

mesmerizing

the aroma
of *ammi's jasmine tea

and we sing
the songs of folklore
on a starry night

*ammi = mother in Urdu language

Hifsa Ashraf

my mother's weave-
my dupatta full of
cross-stitch stars
what is forever of her
is me

Dupatta: Long-metered wrapping fabric scarf worn by Indian women.

Neelam Dadhwal

heirloom chest
I keep my wedding saree
for my daughter

Vandana Parashar

wedding day
her finger too small
for grandma's Claddagh

Deborah P Kolodji

lighting oil lamps
rituals I learnt
my daughter learns

Madhuri Pillai

re-folding the quilts
three generations
of eyes

Deborah P Kolodji

crocheted pillowcases

generations of hands
washing and folding

time stowed
in boxes marked
donation

Cyndi Lloyd

misogyny
how safe is this little mound
of would-be life

Vandana Parashar

mother's moon
mom too longs for a bond
never born

Cyndi Lloyd

thanking my mother
for giving me away
all those years ago
my adoptive parents
gave me all I need

Tracy Davidson

inside my heart
mother's hum...
autumn cicada

Réka Nyitrai

Conception of Love

My father became so enraged when she told him, he beat her bloody with the intent of making her miscarry. A trip to the hospital confirmed a broken nose, but it didn't matter. She still had me in her womb.

Spewing incessant threats that he would take her life, she appeased my father and agreed to go to the abortion clinic to terminate the pregnancy.

At the abortion clinic, safe from him behind closed doors, my mother broke down to the attending nurse, making it very clear that she did not want to terminate the pregnancy, but rather her husband was forcing her.

Empathetic to my mother's plea for help, the nurse gave her the address of a shelter for abused women and ushered her out the back door. And so, my mother ran.

cusp of autumn
I return to my
first breath

Veronika Zora Novak

petrichor
through
the orphanage window
refreshing
the fading memories
of her mother's lullabies

Hifsa Ashraf

*the shiffle-shuffle
of fuzzy slippers...
new mother's lullaby*

Elizabeth Alford

*newborn grandchild
suddenly shy
before meeting her*

Sheila Sondik

*the gentle tug
of mother's hand
second summer*

Rashmi VeSa

*butterfly garden
the happy fluttering
of her little hands*

Wendy Toth Notarnicola

*pink moon
her little face smudged
with my lipstick*

Vandana Parashar

a vase
even for the dandelion
mother's day

Sarah E. Metzler

*lilac in bloom –
I show my daughters how to do
breast self-exam*

Cristina Angelescu

she reminds me
of the coming blue moon
13

Kristen Lindquist

*sinking ship –
how do I teach
my daughter
not to be so hard
on herself*

Susan Burch

another bout
of depression
the children
wait for me
to return

Tia Haynes

double rainbow
our unfulfilled dreams
mother's and mine

Madhuri Pillai

no need
for a dictionary
- mom knows

Roberta Beach Jacobson

first day of college
the ride home feels longer
without her

Wendy Toth Notarnicola

spring break
a birth control article
on my pillow

Claire Vogel Camargo

her hovering
a kite's tail
too long
for the wind

Julie Warther

app lock
mother doesn't know
i write

Richa Sharma

her frayed recipe
for spaghetti sauce
I add more salt

Kristen Lindquist

*mother's apple pie
the secret ingredient
still a secret*

Elizabeth Alford

*persuading each other
to eat the last slice
mum and me*

Irina Guliaeva

*homemade cookies
calling the broken one
special*

Laurie Greer

accepting

*pain and suffering
as God's blessings
my mother makes peace*

*while I question the logic
of every known faith*

Rashmi VeSa

*coronavirus...
mom's voice
so far away*

Elisabetta Castagnoli

ceasefire Mom fine-tunes her hearing aid

Rashmi VeSa

*a spontaneous hug
from my grown daughter
cherry blossoms*

Sheila Sondik

*roses for mom...
listening to her old story
as if for the first time*

Elisabetta Castagnoli

vintage vanity
the scent of mother's
English lavender

Christina Chin

purple iris ...
so thin the skin
of her hands

iris viola ... così sottile la pelle delle sue mani

Lucia Cardillo

a memory
in a silver frame
sepia captured,
mother in her youth
sharing a smile

Marilyn Ward

92 candles
the giggle I never knew
mom has

Claire Vogel Camargo

wan, for lack
of sunlight on her face . . .
who will
teach us how to shine
when she fades away

Debbie Strange

nursing home
she doesn't recall
losing father
telling her he can't visit
because he's old

Christina Chin

three-legged walker
the fourth daughter
she never sees

Laurie Greer

two years
no words between us
mother's day

Lisa Espenmiller

each
year
I stand
by the cards
trying to pick one out
that isn't sentimental or overly expressive about love
and each year I find myself wishing I could run far, far away
because the pain and anguish of being raised
by an abusive, narcissistic mother
doesn't go away -
even on
Mother's
Day

Wendy Toth Notarnicola

mother's number
still in my phone
wondering
if I am someone
to be proud of

Tia Haynes

dark moon
refusing to be
her reflection

Lisa Espenmiller

*mother's hurtful
words imbedded
within my flesh
i forgive i forgive
i forgive her*

Pamela A. Babusci

*mother—
a bitter cold day
in December*

Val Bullock

*mother's deathbed
the apology
i never received*

Pamela A. Babusci

*absolving myself
of her last wishes
not the daughter
she dreamed
I'd be*

Tia Haynes

afternoon moonset
two orphaned daughters
breathe her last breath
a third enters
knowing

Helen Buckingham

a kind nurse says
your mother died
eleven minutes ago

she looks like an angel

I hold
the phone tighter

Cynthia Anderson

cherry blossoms ...
the emptiness of no longer
being a daughter

ciliegio in fiore ... il vuoto di non esser più una figlia

Lucia Cardillo

*flickering tv
my eyes wander
to her empty chair*

Madhuri Pillai

*her wedding anniversary
my mother's ring shines
in an old tin box*

Eufemia Griffo

*busy
on Mother's Day -
the cemetery*

Valentina Ranaldi-Adams

*planting flowers
on my mother's grave
trying to resurrect
a love that never
blossomed*

Pamela A. Babusci

*memorial tree
each year
she dies again*

Julie Warther

white chrysanthemum oh how we miss you

Debbie Strange

Announcements

June 2020 - Elizabeth Alford, guest editor

For nearly all of Spring, we've been sheltering in place. Stuck in our homes, unable to travel, chase new experiences, see the people we love... Great, right? Okay, not really.

BUT a good thing to come out of quarantine---besides the many opportunities to write and improve ourselves in the comfort of our own homes---was the opportunity to be lazy, and not obligated to feel otherwise.

Now, with Summer knocking at our doors, it's time to answer. Your submitted poems should ooze with the laziness you've come to know intimately over these past few months. Feel free to experiment, but don't get TOO lazy; your poems should be deliberate and well-crafted. Move us with your profound laziness.

WHAT TO SEND:

Submit up to five unpublished haiku/senryu, tanka/kyoka, or cherita on the theme of laziness. Paste poems directly into the body of the email (no attachments).

WHERE TO SEND:

Email submissions to femkumag@gmail.com

DEADLINE: June 17, 2020

July 2020 - Praniti Gulyani, guest editor

Theme: Women and Art
More details coming soon.

Marlene Mountain Memorial Contest

Theme: monoku
Open July 5-15
Judged blindly by Lori A Minor and Tia Haynes

Please view full guidelines here: <https://femkumag.wixsite.com/home/contest>

August 2020 - Lori A Minor

No more than 3 unpublished haiku/senryu
Submission email: femkumag@gmail.com
Deadline: August 17, 2020

For the Femku Features, please send one of the following: unpublished haibun, any unpublished type of sequence, or a published or unpublished haiku (or it's related forms) for me to comment on (see issue 10 - March 2019 for example).

New from Title IX Press

A Raindrop Is a Train Window by Praniti Gulyani

"Culled from her own life and rich imagination, *A Raindrop Is a Train Window*, delivers a captivating world with depth beyond Praniti's years. Her ability to keenly perceive the human condition and convey it with lyrical beauty showcases her already achieved skill and robust talent. As a natural-born storyteller, Praniti infuses her work with an emotional honesty that speaks to the truth of what it means to be a woman, from gender-biased expectations and cultural restraints to the relational complexities encountered along life's path. This singular collection is one that belongs in every haibun lovers library."

- Tia Haynes, author of *Leftover Ribbon* (shortlist, 2019 Touchstone Distinguished Book Award)

Read and download your copy here:

https://e7b207b8-f70d-4a2b-9a92-95e280e7fb92.filesusr.com/ugd/8a417d_8a5894c6b175419d980203b0c1aa8727.pdf

The Call of Wildflowers by Julie Bloss Kelsey

Julie Bloss Kelsey's debut book, *"The Call of Wildflowers"* is a heart-warming book of haiku and tanka that explores the special bond between mother and child. From pregnancy to college, Julie shares moments with her kids that so many of us experience and forget. Poems about holding her kids, snuggling, and even the messiness of childhood, brought back my own memories, which

add an unintended layer of meaning to every poem. And if you haven't been a mother, these poems will make you feel like you are one. It's that easy to get caught up in reading her work. Anyone who reads this book will see these poems as the gems they are, and a testament of a mother's love."

- Susan Burch, *author of Keeping Score: Angry Tanka, Vice President of the Tanka Society of America, & 2018 Touchstone Award Winner for Individual Poem*

Read and download here:

https://e7b207b8-f70d-4a2b-9a92-95e280e7fb92.filesusr.com/ugd/8a417d_12071309fb534807ae10bc6a3e7e975e.pdf

Red Flags by Lori A Minor

"Line by line, "Red Flags" boldly exposes the darkness lurking behind a mask of domestic tranquility. Be forewarned: this short collection packs one hell of a punch."

-Elizabeth Alford, *shortlisted for the 2018 Touchstone Award for Individual Poem*

Read and download here:

https://e7b207b8-f70d-4a2b-9a92-95e280e7fb92.filesusr.com/ugd/8a417d_eb8651d4dc124f4c873b157486a4883e.pdf