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Mother

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Mother

Lorna Van Gilst

You were not there today
when I stopped in to visit.
No, that gaunt woman
with the twitchy arms
purpled with random bruises,
fidgeting to find a settled spot
on the edge of the bed—
that was not you.

But it was your room,
and I had come
three hundred miles
to visit you,
And so I sat beside that woman
on the bed,
rubbed her knees,
ran my fingers through
her steel-wool hair,
caressed her back,
then pressed my forehead

into the soft sweet hollow neckplace
of my mother—
and then you kissed me
with your mother love.