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The Woman I Call Mother

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The Woman I Call Mother

After the third mister-ectomy
they have convinced her
that she is a bitch,
that she did drive them to other women,
that it was her fault.
She finds herself gazing
in mirrors, counting wrinkles,
wishing the alimony was enough
for a face lift.
She sits alone, having lost
her children to adulthood,
and dreams of clorox cocktails
and bottles of sleeping pills
and the flowers at her funeral.

I write to her weekly,
call her when she does not respond,
make sure she is not alone
on the ex-anniversaries.
Each summer I make a pilgrimage
to this woman I call mother.
Each summer I try to help her
uncover the human being
so many men have buried.

Karen J. Hall