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Mask Making

Connemara Wadsworth

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Connemara Wadsworth's chapbook, *The Possibility of Scorpions*, about the years her family lived in Iraq in the early 1950s, won the White Eagle Coffee Store Press 2009 Chapbook Contest. Her poems are forthcoming or have appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *Solstice*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Smoky Blue Literary & Arts Magazine*, and *Valparaiso*. "The Women" was nominated for publication in Pushcart Prize Best of the Small Presses by *Bloodroot Magazine*. Connemara and her husband live in Newton, Massachusetts.

Mask Making

I have oiled the machine, cut
the cloth, the last of the lining.

 I'm still mastering
the technique of sewing in elastic,
laying in pleats.

How easy masks are to misplace.

Each coat must pocket one,
 each purse,
 glove compartment.

I will stitch some with color,
and pattern to shelter in.

I'll pleat one that will herald
Lichtenstein's red lipstick kiss.

 Another from a bandana
appliquéd with the corner triangle,
another with sequins along the un-
 remarkable edges.

Maybe take a Sharpie marker,
write, *Ten feet away please*.

It is the nature of its design
to mask smiles, frowns
 leaving us to read
only each other's eyes.
They say this won't be over soon.

I'll tailor thin shields—make
more masks from cloth scraps.