

HOLLY DAY

The First Week

to see her sleeping in her crib, so quiet,
eyes closed, to feel the rage from moments
before finally subsiding, my
fists unclench I know I'm
sick. I know I'm sick. how can I
go through explain this
to all the people who stop by to see
us how hard it is to get
through night after night
constant screaming,
the painful
wailing,
the constant questioning of my husband, his
mother, all the relatives who seem
to know the secrets of motherhood
but won't tell me. why won't
they tell me.

Holly Day has taught writing classes at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, since 2000. Her poetry has recently appeared in Tampa Review, SLAB, and Gargoyle, and her published books include Walking Twin Cities, Music Theory for Dummies, and Ugly Girl.

W. M. HERRING

Leaving

We all left the island
answered our mother's prayers:
six girls well-settled in Toronto
savouring island food
relishing island time
only at Caribana.

Some slaved as domestics
got through teacher's college.
I attended nursing school—free—
worked fingers to the bone
persevered without sleep.

Mother would not move:
stayed to the end on an island
where a three-year-old told her
You must call me Master Henry:
she replied *Not so long as I wipe your bum!*
walked out the door, left
that house for the last time.

W.M. Herring lives on rural property on Vancouver Island, in the traditional territory of the T'Sou-ke Nation. She shares this wonderful place with an abundance of wildlife, a few pets, and her husband.

ILONA MARTONFI

The Chaperones

A space to live in that was clearly her own—prayer, knitting needles, crochet needles, scissors, sewing thread, material, and an electric sewing machine. Buttons, zippers, needlepoint canvases, coloured silk, mohair. Cottons. Lin. Natural fibers. Skeins of yarn and wool. Cooking. Baking bread. Pizza making. Gardening. Planting two apple trees. Purple lilacs. Raking. Sweeping. Washing. Ironing. The daily rituals. The dailiness of household chores. The chaperones had their job. Her four children were the spies, eyes and ears, for their father. He knew they would tell on their mother.

—Excerpt, *23rd Winter of a Battered Wife*, Memoir

Ilona Martonfi has published four poetry books, Blue Poppy (2009); Black Grass (2012); The Snow Kimono (2015); and Salt Bride (2019). Her forthcoming work includes The Tempest (Inanna Publications, 2021). Her writing appears in five chapbooks, anthologies, and various magazines. She is also the artistic director of Visual Arts Centre Reading Series and Argo Bookshop Reading Series and recipient of the QWF 2010 Community Award.