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## RENEE NORMAN

### 4 loads of laundry

hang in the sun  
 3 generations of women  
 pin unpin  
 the nightgowns  
 to from  
 the line

#### *First Generation*

your lips  
 at a sycophantic salesclerk  
 when you buy me a new gown  
 i notice how your cheeks sink  
 how you hang the wet clothes upside down

#### *Second Generation*

i examine the clothes  
 to see if they are dry  
 the skin on my hands is parched  
 lined with creases  
 that cross between mothers and children and nightgowns  
 whose hems gently stir  
 at the push from a breeze

#### *Third Generation*

your gums show a large tear  
 where 2 permanent teeth rip through  
 barely do you have the strength  
 to open a clothespin  
 and throw the clothes unfolded  
 like paper dolls into baskets  
 that once you climbed inside

4 loads of laundry hang in the sun  
 in the sun

*Renee Norman, Ph.D, is a poet, writer, and teacher living in Coquitlam, BC. Her poetry appears in her book House of Mirrors, in the anthology The Missing Line, published by Inanna Publications, and in many literary and academic journals across Canada and the U.S.*