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RENEE NORMAN

Backhand Through the Mother

the blur of nights
when all else
asleep
the two of us
rocked
in the creak suck sound of
minutes
wanting
her to finish
one part drifting off to
sleep
each draw and suck a
shock
of body pleasure

you passed me hot cloths
early morning hours
knew my pain
sought to ease
the crust
hot compresses drew
my reluctant milk
softened
the click tsk sound of
seconds

you cooked scrubbed
organized
red raw hands
dry folds of skin
crooked index finger
(never properly healed)
shook
your fatigue pointed out
my dependence gratitude
guilt

my hands
dry folds of skin
hold pass cook
scrub organize
mother to daughter
daughter to mother
mother to daughter
your touch there
your print left
on the creak suck click, tsk
sound of seconds
smoothed between us

SUSAN GILLIES

She was seven years old when she
gave me the gift, when I saw she
was me and not mine; when I learned
how to scream and not yell. She
could sit and just paint, never signing
her name, always giving away, never
wanting much back....

Sun bleeds through cloud,
Water bleeds through sand,
Ink bleeds through paper,
I bleed through her,
And I know why she's here.

Susan Gillies is a stay-at-home writer and mother of two currently working on a collection of poems entitled Pink Desserts.