

The Whipping Woman

The woman I hire to daughter my mother
makes bi-weekly visits to the dementia ward
Lies down beside the near-still waters

Accepts the mouth kisses wet with drool
from where gravelly words
dribble down washed-out gullies

Like a whipping boy she bears the brunt
of each face-to-face flagellation
that my rawhide flesh refuses

And for twenty dollars an hour I purchase
like the contraposition of a professional mourner
substitution for services I can't supply



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Poet **Ellaraine Lockie** writes poetry, nonfiction, and children's stories and teaches workshops on the creative process for schools and libraries. Artist **TC Epperson** is a woman of leisure living in Honolulu, Hawaii with her Air-Force-officer husband and their three children. She occupies herself by reading, writing, drawing and teaching English Composition. "The Whipping Woman" has also appeared in *Schuykill Valley Journal of the Arts*, *The Raintown Review*, and *HeartLodge Poetry Journal*.