

My Mother? Never

by Vickie Cimprich

1943 Hung by the hair, that gal
on the grinder next to mom
at Wrights war plane plant
awaited more rescue,
but my mother Betty had
at least the presence
to switch off the machine.

1947 Jack Clark's wife could wile away
any hours in whatever ways while
Jack Clark and Betty quarreled
lovers' messes until Jack busted up
Betty's mahogany bureau's mirrors
all over her heyday.

1950-67 This finally-mom could glow
in some different facelights.
Early on, her ruby-painted nails
scratched skin off an awful lot of balloons
my father and myself blew into, but
"Gee, Vic, she's a good kid,"
sang my dad's odd Sanctus. True.

1980s Evidently her Manhattans, up,
would fall to me, as wherewithal to put them
went out the door in the same dead air conditioner
that bore a brand new silver watch she'd hid.

1990s Oh well.
So no cannula tried more
with the O2 than I with the unwieldy wheels
to abet around her movable feists
from Buckskin Bev's to Baptist Convalescent.
Which she felt. Skin to skin once again,
we could do this birth-fine thing
she had to do. In the end,
my arms came through.