

Lisa Duncan's Mom

by Cami Park

Lisa Duncan's mom was puffy, and you could always see part of her breasts. She said she was friends with my mom before she died, and she told me that my mom killed herself, even though my dad told me she died of blood poisoning. At the time, I didn't think that could be the same thing.

Lisa's mom's boyfriend lived with them, and once, they picked me up to spend the night at Lisa's house. As they were backing out of the driveway, Lisa's mom's boyfriend, who was driving, yelled at Lisa's mom to get her goddamned head out of the goddamned way. It got quiet after that. I just stayed still.

My dad told me what Lisa Duncan's mom had said about my mom's death was "irresponsible," and that he had straightened her out. The next time I was at Lisa's house, her mom looked at me really closely and then took me and Lisa into her bedroom. We did hair and makeup until Lisa's mom's boyfriend came in from working on his motorcycle, greasy, and looking for beer. It took me just under an hour to walk home that day, but I got back in time to brush my hair and wash my face before my dad could see.

A few years later, when I was back in town on a break from college, Lisa's mom took me to where my mom was buried. She'd planted petunias. I could never remember how to get back there after that, but I remember the stone, pressed flat into the earth, read "MOTHER."

