

# Bearded Lady

by Jamie Iredell

When menopause paused the flow of estrogen and her ovaries shedding eggs, and her uterus its lining, tiny whiskers popped from her chin. At first she trimmed them with her husband's electric nose hair trimmer while he sheared away at their credit card debt and mortgage by trundling his body off to the insurance firm he'd seat belted himself to, a poem-wielding vice presidentialism. Nights this husband returned home still hungry sometimes, even for her forearms against his own. More often for beef liver, onion, potatoes, mashed. His fork was the fork of a forklift and his face the warehouse into which he drove the loads. After dinner: *Law and Order* reruns. He always guessed the murderer before her and for this, and this alone, she hated him.

