

# Wife

*by* Lori Lou Freshwater

On the day she died my mind was flooded with images of her, mixed up, no order, just chaos taking up space as if to hold back the absence which was beginning to take its own form and which over the next days and weeks would strike me down, not until I was on my knees but well after, grinding my curled up and hopeless body with the gravity it alone controlled until the pain and loss felt as if it was breaking my bones not by snaps, but by a slow ache and giving in to the pressure. In these days I wanted to escape the images, and there were so few ways to help me do this. Even drugs and alcohol only softened the edges, blurred the center, slowed the herky-jerky slides of her living a life she no longer had. We, no longer had. But years have passed now, and those images have changed or disappeared. What used to be a scene has broken into fragments and blips of her on a screen I can't control or manipulate. I feel a crushing guilt about this. I wished her away. I begged her to stop coming. I could not take the pain I should have been able to endure. And now, as time unfolds in front of me, I wonder what will be left of her. Will I be able to see her when I need to, or will she completely retreat into an unbearable blind spot.

