

JENNIFER HAMBRICK

Matryoshka

In Sunday school they told us
we'd get prizes for memorizing it

Our Father

so in the kitchen I spin in circles
babbling verses by rote
while a Bundt cake bakes
and at the kitchen table
my mother's trying to read

who art in heaven

and Joan of Arc's more interesting
than me or Bundt cake which
she never wanted in the first place

hollow be thy name

and she tells me it's *hallowed*, not *hollow*
and I keep spinning in circles not knowing
what that means but somehow wondering if
maybe Joan of Arc is hallowed and maybe
also the nesting dolls my older sister brought
back from Russia and gave to me—

matryoshka, mother

matryoshka, woman of distinction.

Woman begets woman begets woman
down to the smallest doll locked solid
in her wooden form, all painted in the same
matronly apron and babushka, smiling
the same thin black line, cheeks rouged
with the same pink paint circles.

My favorite is the tiny one in the middle

and forgive us our trespasses

and with young, spindly fingers I remove her
from the epicenter of her mothers

as we forgive those

who trespass against us

and put her on the shelf with my herd of wild
glass horses, fitting mother, grandmother,

great-grandmother back together
distinction echoing for generations
in their hollow core
on earth as in heaven

HERON TREE

2 July 2017

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Hambrick is the author of *Unscathed* (NightBallet Press 2013) and two forthcoming poetry collections. Her poems have also appeared in *Santa Clara Review*, *Mad River Review*, *Third Wednesday*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, and *Modern Haiku*. She is the founding editor of the International Women's Haiku Festival, and in fall 2017 she will be the invited guest poet for The Poet's Song project in Worthington, Ohio. A classical singer, public radio broadcaster and producer, and voice talent, she lives in Columbus, Ohio. Online at *Inner Voices* (jenniferhambrick.com).

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