

The



...maybe

(or maybe not)

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**WHY I LIKE IT:** *Fiction Editor JOEY CRUSE writes... Lisa Zimmerman's, "The Truth, Maybe," is a story that lies – not to you the reader but to itself. The tale is an exercise in excision, of confusion. Our speakers' story is tragic, all too relatable, and contemporary in the sense of emotional control. Much of their story is inference or, in other words, as you read the syuzhet reveals the fabula; chronology is yours in the making running late for a meeting. The depths that this tale reaches prove a talent and control wielded by the author that rivals the compaction that takes place within poetics. I won't divulge the main pivot, but I won't need to – the story speaks for itself. Zimmerman offers you a glass onion without the macguffin, the layers*

*to unpeel without the letdown of having been led astray. There are justified anxieties and there can be justified lies – but dealing with the consequences of an altered truth is usually where our empathies get us into trouble. Honest, maybe, throughout, Zimmerman has done a great job here. Read. Enjoy. Feel.*

*Five Stars*

### **QUALITY QUOTABLE (for the love of language...)**

“You *are* trying, aren’t you?”

### **The Truth, Maybe**

You can’t be late to your therapist’s office again. Seriously, you *cannot*. If there’s a train at First and Stonybrook you’ll scream. With the windows rolled up. But by the time you get to the intersection you only have to wait for a kid on a red bike, helmet too big and lopsided on his head. Then the yoga mom jogging over the crosswalk with her BMW stroller, with the toddler, bundled up like a hockey player, kicking his little legs. God, that catch in your throat again. The rake scraping down the inside of your ribs to your broken fucking heart.

Your therapist will ask you for the second or third time, her voice full of—what? Care? Confidence? Sympathy?

“You and Carson can try again.”

Pause.

“You *are* trying, aren’t you?”

You’re trying to want to, you think. You tap your fingers on the steering wheel. Maybe you’re actually *trying* to be late for your session. Why? So you won’t have to avoid her eyes for an entire hour because you know she’ll see the lie inside you.

Carson says therapy doesn’t work unless you tell the truth. You live so far from the truth you’re in another country. You never told anybody about the late termination when you were only fifteen. Or the terrible way you got pregnant in the first place. The sweaty wad of bills in your hand walking past people holding signs outside the clinic. You don’t tell Carson or your therapist you’re afraid your machinery is broken. Irreparable. So much blood in the bathtub. In the toilet.

Blood on your new flannel sheets. You sobbing, falling apart again in Carson's strong, capable, truthful arms.

**AUTHOR NOTE:** *I wrote this story when my creative writing students and I were experimenting with flash fiction. I think often of the secrets women keep—the terrible grief of miscarriage, the confusion, trauma, and shame of rape.*

**AUTHOR BIO:** Lisa Zimmerman's poetry collections include *How the Garden Looks from Here* (Violet Reed Haas Poetry Award winner) *The Light at the Edge of Everything* (Anhinga Press) and *Sainted* (Main Street Rag). Her poetry and fiction have appeared in *Redbook*, *The Sun*, *SWWIM Every Day*, *Cave Wall*, *Poet Lore*, *Florida Review*, *Book of Matches*, and many other journals. Her poems have been nominated for Best of the Net, five times for the Pushcart Prize, and included in the 2020 *Best Small Fictions* anthology. She teaches creative writing and literature at the University of Northern Colorado and lives in Fort Collins, Colorado.