

I Drank the Kool-Aid

By Elizabeth Dresdow ©

I run my hands over the smooth, thick rind of a pumpkin.

“The stories aren’t real. Them aliens aren’t real.”

The words pound into my head as I roll out the dough.

I sigh.

I wish my mother would quit reading.

She sank into the arm chair like Horace Slughorn in Harry Potter  
turning into a grizzled old sack of potatoes,  
something sweet gone bad.

I pull out the bread and tomatoes.

My mother keeps reading.

She is always reading.

She never helps with the shopping.

The house is messy and smells like bad cheese  
from the many discarded pizza boxes around the rooms.

The magazines bore into me ,

The tomatoes are too red.

I am drawn into the covers – the headlines.

Prince Harry catches my eye – caught in another scandal.

Lindsey Lohan has been drug free all this time.

Birdman is real.

My mother laughs at something.

I want to turn away from the lies  
but the bright images bring me back,  
desperate to be read and believed.

I prided myself that I did not want to read.

My mother sinks lower.

I wish for once she would help me cook.

But she doesn't give a darn for me...or anyone but the stories.

I keep reading.

The tomatoes sit in my hand – forgotten and turning redder.

I knew the stories held some truth, and I was desperate to find it.

They drew me in – it was too late.

I did not want to see my favorite actors and celebrities portrayed this way.

I did not want to see the lies printed about Anne Hathaway,

or how sick the queen of England and Meryl Streep are.

When I know in reality they aren't...or is there a shred of truth?

A fly buzzed around the light fixture.

I knew, as I knew the sunbeam warmed my face,

That I believed the stories.