**How Could a Mother?**

*By Bruce Holland Rogers*

It's better doing this woman to woman, don't you think? Before we get started, is there anything you need? Do you want something to drink? Coffee? A soft drink? Do you need to use the bathroom?

How had the day gone, before all this started? Were you at home the entire day, both you and your boyfriend? Had your boyfriend been drinking? Had you been drinking? How much did he drink during the day? In the evening? And you? How much did you have? Can you estimate? More than a six-pack? More than two six-packs? Was your daughter in the house with you the whole time?

When was it that your daughter—when was it that Josie started to cry? What was your state of mind when you punished her? What were you thinking when she wouldn't stop crying? Did your boyfriend say anything about Josie's crying? What did he say? What did you do to make her stop? Then, what did your boyfriend do? Did you do anything to restrain him? Did you say anything? No, I mean, did you say anything to your boyfriend about what he was doing to your daughter?

Did you try to wake her up right away? Did you check her pulse? Did you listen for her breathing? When was the next time that you checked on her condition?

What time did you wake up? How soon after you woke up did you check on your daughter? You could tell right away? How did you know? Then what did you do? Was the abduction story his idea, or yours? Which car did you take? How did you come to choose Cascadia State Park? Had you been to the area before? When had he been there? Did he say anything to you about why he thought the park would be a good place? Where were you when you called the police to report her missing?

Is there anything you'd like to add?

Does this typescript accurately reflect what you have told me? Do you need more time to read it before you sign?

Can you guess how it feels for me, even with all the practice I have, to ask these questions? Do you wonder what questions I'm not able to ask you? Do you wonder if I have children of my own? Are you a monster? What is a monster? Did you know there were officers like me who handled only cases like this, one after another? Do you have any thoughts about the question no one can answer? Not the one everyone asks, but the one only a mother who has felt her own hands shake with a rage that is bigger than she is can ask? Not that I'd willingly trade the suffering on my side of the table for the suffering on your side, but why haven't I? Why not?