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Who Invented Kisses?

by Judith Neuman

Was it someone from our distant past?
Perhaps a newborn's mother
so excited by his glow
that she drew him to her lips
and before she knew what happened,
had puckered up and kissed?

Or was it a father home from the hunt
whose young son ran to him with joy?
He grabbed the child and swung him in the air,
then, on the sweaty forehead,
firmly placed his lips upon the boy.

Perhaps it was young lovers who
in searching for each other
reached with their hands to hold
their heads in close confine,
lips accidentally meeting
hardly breathing,
tongues reaching and receding.

Or was it a maiden who bade farewell
to her knight on his way to battle?
With a hug so tight,
a grasp so sweet that
two pair of lips could not help but meet?

Perhaps it was old gray heads,
holding each other's hands,
drawing close to one another,
counting their remaining days,
their lips uniting before
the final parting of the ways.

Maybe kisses were not *invented*,
but built into the human gene,
like smiles or frowns or laughter or love—
a needed balance to complete a human being.

