

Misinterpreting a Collage During Trump's Presidency

by Jaime Mera



I see a wasp. It's Trump and Pence and every televangelist that condemns lesbians. Sean Hannity's anti-LGBT rhetoric, like the hornet that crawls into the cracks of attics

in America's heartland, riles up red-hatted white males to swarm and antagonize by parading their straight pride. The woman's eye, sober-wide, is as steady as a steel beam.

Her face is ready for the sting. I look closer at the collage. Something isn't right—the broad waist. I discover it's a female elm sawfly. Now, it joins

with the woman. The yellow bands around its abdomen matches the sash worn by Susan B. Anthony as she marched in Kansas. Gold-colored drops glow with hope.

I'm not surprised that I got it wrong. I keep mixing things up, seeing something that isn't there. Last year, during dinner at my parent's house, we discussed the Religious Freedom Act.

I said, "Two women in love should be allowed to get a pizza together." My brother-in-law said, "We need to protect business owner's rights." I said, "It's discrimination against the gay community."

He said, "The Bible says homosexuality is an abomination." After that, whenever my parents invited me over, I asked, "Will he be there?" I skipped my nephew's high school graduation.

In July, my schnauzer Bogie had to be put down. My parents away on an Alaskan cruise, my sister busy at nursing school, my brother-in-law—Brian—offered to come with me.

In the room, we held hands. Before the veterinarian inserted the needle, Brian kissed the top of Bogie's head. It's common to confuse the sawfly for another pest.

In the larvae stage, it looks similar to a slug. Later, it shifts slowly into resembling a caterpillar. After pupation, people presume it's a wasp. The female's ovipositor unfolds

like a jackknife and it saws into the stem of the plant to deposit its eggs. It's harmless to us—we make the error of mistaking it for a stinger.