

Three Poems by Cathy Porter

Strange Doorways

There was nothing more familiar
to Sara than a strange doorway.
Just the sight of one got her going,
like an aphrodisiac. Leaving Andy's
Ark Tavern, wondering if she would
end up behind door number 1 –
that belonged to the guy who was
telling her she looked like Marilyn Monroe;
or maybe door number 2 – attached
to the guy who told her he was on
wife number 3. Door number 3 –
now that guy was a junkie, but
at least she could always score some
dope off him. So many doors, so little
time. Sara knocked back another shot,
stood up on the bar and shouted:
“gentlemen, start your engines!”
And most did seem to be firing up
their motors. Sara knew that all
the women, and some of the guys,
thought she was a whore. She didn't care –
their lives were nothing like hers.
They were born with silver spoons in
their mouths, not like the wooden one
she was born with, still choking
on the splinters.

One Long Roll Into Hell

The insanity – day after day,
the same routine: bet and lose.
Bet and lose. One would think that
at some point, you stop. But not
Lou and Sammy, who hit the track
everyday, and never come home
with anything other than a crumpled
old racing form, and a new set of lies
to tell the wives. THIS horse is always
going to be the savior, the one that sets
them free from a life of work and
suffering. And everyday, the suffering
continues, fast as these horses to
the wire, though no winning horse
is to be found here – only losses,
long shots, and broken dreams, held in
the creases of a crumpled old racing form.

Organ Donors

In between pauses
she pauses to check her pulse,
and wonders if he's married, divorced,
or both at the same time.
He slams Southern Comfort,
treating each shot with blatant disrespect,
and wonders how long she'll make him
wait before he can get to the good stuff.
Tom Waits talk-sings about the heart of
Saturday night, and the entire place

seems to share pieces of the same organ,
tiny leftovers transplanted into
lifeless bodies, long past
their expiration dates.

Cathy Porter's poetry has appeared in *Plainsongs*,
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