

## Three Poems by Cathy Porter

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### 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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Journal* and various other publications. Her  
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