

Cathy Porter

On the Market

We scrub every room,
toss junk and gold, stack papers
of import for future reference –
radio at full blast to drown the
critics in my head. Receipts
from 1975 can go, along with
empty pill bottles. The Husker
clock stays, but Dad's bowling
ball will roll no more. An old
fishing manual, boxes of clothes,
find their way to the dumpster.
Are you watching – hovering over
my work, nodding approval?
The neighbors peek out from behind
curtains, as if thieves are taking over.
Outdated magazines, more how-to
manuals -- stay on task, take breaks
when needed -- deadlines to meet,
a house to put on the market.
Life packed up and ready to fade.
And not one manual that covers grief.

A Small Sliver

We must pray.
I'm told this every time I cuss out
cancer, which makes me cuss
even more; when you get smacked,
you respond.

So, we meet for coffee.
I rant. You listen with a curved eye,
ready to cast judgement in the
form of an opinion.

I should keep it all to myself.
Grief is catchy, even without medical
evidence to support this theory.
Nobody wants a slice of that pie.

And all I want is an ear –
A small sliver will do. Keep those
eyes to yourself if they can't keep
their mouth shut.

Cathy Porter's poetry has appeared in *Plainsongs*, *Homestead Review*, *California Quarterly*, *Hubbub*, *Cottonwood*, *Comstock Review*, and various other journals. She has two chapbooks available from Finishing Line Press: *A Life In The Day* (2012), and *Dust And Angels* (2014). Her latest chapbook, *Exit Songs*, was published in 2016 from Dancing Girl Press, based in Chicago. Cathy is a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee, and serves as a special editor for the journal *Fine Lines* in Omaha, NE.

