

Cathy Porter

Still Life

Summer nights will never wrinkle –
never sprout gray into blond, never
limp into restaurants on the arms
of a stranger, summoned to give
respite to a family member.
You will never be that number –
and if you are, you will rock it
like nobody has ever dared,
dancing and laughing as you make
your way through every hangout –
energy dialed up higher than the ones
young enough to be the grandkids.
There will be no memory outage –
no hospice care last-minute bedside
confessions with witnesses on hand
to twist your final words – no, your exit
will be on your terms – a fireball of life
shooting off into the distance,
leaving behind the wide-eyed disbelief
of every number limping along
at the pace of a toddler, almost at still life

Scratch the Surface

We explode with questions,
face down minuscule answers
that find their way to the surface;
these hours, a new challenge –
the duty of patience taken off
the shelf. When the last guest
fades, we exchange differences.

Our fathers meet in dreams -
break every confidence shared
on warm Augusts nights, front
porches on rotation, choices
laid out under the stars. I stretch
to meet your expectations; fall
short before dawn.

Intoxication

From a side view, you see the forms –
all shapes and sizes, decisions left unguarded

And it all makes sense – the dull pinch
of time, questions never asked
unless intoxicated

By the occasional promise that comes
through, followed by habits with more
experience and pull -

Than any wish could ever hope to
compete with; truth stranger than
precaution taken under oath

I sit and count each lesson - smooth the
rough edges from demands, dust off prayers
in light of acceptance

Cathy Porter's poetry has appeared in *Plainsongs*, *Kentucky Review*, *Chaffin Journal*, *Pennine Ink* (UK), *Clark Street Review*, and various other journals. She has two chapbooks available from Finishing Line Press. Her chapbook *Exit Songs* is forthcoming from Dancing Girl Press. She lives in Omaha, NE.