

Three Poems by Cathy Porter

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At lunchtime
on the anniversary of the day
Elvis left the building

I wonder what
you'll be doing next year
at this time, or if you'll even be

Some falls we can anticipate
others show up when our pants are down

Not only on an Elvis day
but also on Amy, Kurt, and Jim days

Or any day of anyone who
checked out way too early

Before you had the chance
to ask who the hell they were

Folded

It's never the right time, is it? -
To extend that first branch, to feel
the hot breath of forgiveness

And the years melt before you –
the body feels this; the eyes ignore
the evidence. Another day without words

There will be updates provided
by third-party informants; you store
this new information inside yourself,
and smile in the name of courtesy

We forever miss the ones we let
get away, or the ones who tossed us
aside as easily as a smirk. The stars
tonight do not blink

It's never the right time, is it? –
That first move, that first call;
our hands tied to past convictions,
the hot breath of time, folded.

Stilted

When matching ages start to disappear,
it hits like a sucker punch to the gut,
or a soft brush on the cheek; an equal
opportunity announcement

The fresh reminder of time – as in
time's almost up – its hot breath creeping
down your spine as you do your best
to stay cool

Over your shoulder - the glory years;
to the sky – future events, golden or rusted -

both equally alarming. But the days
move on with or without your trepidation

As do you. Work. Eat. Sleep.
The phone rings; soldier down.

You turn to your partner, if there
is one, and take a long look. The words come
slow and stilted

Just like you, on the best of days

Cathy Porter's poetry has appeared in *Plainsongs*,
Clark Street Review, *Permafrost*, *California
Quarterly*, *Chaffin Journal*, *Pennine Ink* (UK), and
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