

## Three Poems by Cathy Porter

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### Downtown Prophets

Concrete souls  
City winters, downtown prophets  
No land, no sun  
Lit cigarette hangs from suicide lips  
Clouds like animals  
He yells: are you a cat or a dog person?  
You can be both  
Only if you keep it to yourself  
And lie on your back  
Count out the change  
That falls from the pockets  
Of an invisible sun

## **Doing Dishes**

The moon follows me around the room,  
dancing between shadows --

my escort through these halls, pictures stirred  
by echoes of past indiscretions. I hear the voices

of deception, drunk and disorderly conduct.  
I piece together the finer details, careful to honor  
silent partners; you seem okay with this.

But I miss our talks -- the nights when words  
never failed to entertain, and anything was possible  
in between dreams. We circle through the stars,  
avoid the halo of regret.

I know the timeline; tonight I choose to believe.

You wash, I'll dry. As old as two people in a house  
that never settles – even on nights when the moon plays  
dead.

## Stagnation

Each section, divided by mood and events,  
settles over the skin. I tick off the minutes  
until the day loses color, go over lists  
in my head that are life-threatening.  
It's quiet outside -- the neighbors  
as boarded up as I have become.  
The comfort of stagnation, long past  
the years of endless summers.  
I could invite someone over, make coffee  
and talk far into the darkness, but numbers  
and faces have dimmed. I make a cup  
for one, watch the sky for warnings.  
Some nights play out like this; some lay low  
behind closed doors.

**Cathy Porter**'s poetry has appeared in *Plainsongs*,  
*Chaffin Journal*, *Hubbub*, *Pennine Ink* (UK), *Cloudbank*,  
and various other journals. Her poem "When Doves  
Cry" was included in the NightBallet Press anthology,  
*Delirious-A Poetic Celebration of Prince* in 2016. 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*, is forthcoming from  
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