

Three Poems by Cathy Porter

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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