

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Holly Prado: Three Poems

Holly Prado · Wednesday, April 22nd, 2015

Holly Prado is a poet from Nebraska. Her recent publications (2012) include poetry featured in the literary review *Malpais Review* and in *Askew* magazine; in *Chiron Review* (2014) and regularly on the poetry/art blog *timetimestimes3.blogspot.com*. She and her husband, Harry Northup, are founding members of [Cahuenga Press](#), a poets publishing cooperative which has been publishing books of poetry since 1989.

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### Paper

*for Wanda Coleman*

Vivid air, the air December brings in this  
good desert California; nothing visible  
on Sunday, early, except the air — bringing  
us translucence, which will of course  
be gone much sooner than it seems:  
Each entity we call “a day” shifts weather

and our brains: Harsh wind’s been slapping  
all of us the last two nights. It jangles electronics,  
irritates my skin, wakes me up before I want to lose  
the blankets and my dreams. Another poet died  
last week, a presence I have counted on for forty years.  
I slather lotion on my hands. I can’t do anything for death.

I know the difference between air that rings, has perfect pitch  
and wind that punishes. My solid ground right now is this:  
Set words to the ephemeral; give air some permanence. I can only  
make this bad season what I’ve learned: dry desert preservation,

language as the rock and tortoise, outlasting flesh, outlasting human grief.

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## Body With Dark Flowers

Someone leaves, heads home.

How overwrought she was when I first knew her.  
Now, it's jeans. Something crimson, warm around her throat.

The body wants that red alive  
and comforting. How many scarves  
hang behind my door, unworn?

Pain when I sleep. Pain when I lift  
myself each morning to the world,  
once more the world, the missing  
loved ones: They rush away — to death,  
or simply to go home without me.

I live my gathered, softened bones, my stubborn  
memories: dead woman's silver earrings, enormous,  
dropped behind her as she shed her angers;  
then, romantic painting jammed with yellow roses,  
with mornings when the painter and my younger self  
preferred our company to anybody else's: such reaching  
toward the next day and the next. She never had a chance  
against the cancer that robbed her hands of brushes, roses,  
husband, cats; her coffee soothed with half and half.

Loss throws itself around my throat, my shoulders,  
my stooped back. It heats the winter chill,  
protects me. Odd? But isn't this our story,  
our age-old standing-at-the-door to watch  
a favorite someone disappear along the street,  
get in her car, forget our morning because  
unspent afternoon entices her? My ever-present  
weariness stutters into these days with prayer,  
whether or not it matters. I do have faith  
in this: suffer then shut up; suffer and receive  
the beauty of what can never come again.

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## Paleography

Trees today, glittering the wind:  
at Lisa's, miles from here. And now,

at home, there's music, too, like wind — tango, funereal  
and solemn; tango; thrillingly erotic. Earlier this week,  
someone mentioned paradox: All of us dark forest  
mixed with watery air, accompanied by accordian,

swift legs, agonizing hips. Wind: One side of the city  
to another. There are no countries, only trees,

earliest human refuge, how we began to speak because  
the branches filled with wind taught us consonants,  
the vowels, and subtle metaphor — everything that voices  
natural intelligence, just as ten of us at Lisa's read our writing  
to each other, understood the sway, the meaning in its roots  
beneath the page. We're always

one rhythmic step toward faith; one swerve away  
from any answer: Body crossed with worship stunned  
by poetry's hard wind: accordion's harmonic turbulence.

Author photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher

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