

Holly Day

Fade to Black

In my movie
the Rapture will only lift the broken, burnt
bodies of the people who caught the first hot wave
of the bomb blast, locked outside the lead-lined
steel-girded and concrete-shielded cathedrals
housing the elite of humanity. In my movie
angels and seraphim will lift only the dead
lying in the streets outside
the crumbling ruins of civilization

the children barricaded beneath
kitchen sinks, huddled against one another

waiting for their parents to come home from work
or the store. In my movie, the upper
echelon of society
will emerge from protective cocoons
stocked with cases of tinned meat and
sparkling water to find they've inherited
a world burnt beyond recognition, unfit for
habitation, abandoned by God. In
my movie, these people will fall to
the ground, scream, "Why, why, why", or some similar

cliché, just before the picture fades
and the screen grows cold and black. It's not
a perfect ending, but it's all
I'm able to come up with.

Midnight Caller

at night the
angry thud of the
dishwasher

sounds like monsters
the groan
of the house quietly settling sounds like

prowlers
I can almost see the deranged face
of my family's murderer pressed against

the glass
sliding doors.

Take It

folded wolf
soft flesh beside me, I
am so hot, unfurls into something I know

baby bird above me, wolf
clutched in its beak, I
touch the white skeleton man, push it up, I know

what you want, man-child, wolf
creature, put it in my head, through my head, I
dream in kaleidoscopes, know

love for fractions of seconds, wrap me in sick sweat, wolf
spit, take this burning I
am almost burning--rip me up, make me know.

From the Garden

I come in from the garden and I'm covered
in slugs. Tiny slabs of snot with antennae waving
slowly moving over my sandaled
feet, pausing in confusion at trying to pass
a particularly thick black ankle hair
navigating the rough etched surface
of a heavy Tibetan silver bracelet.
I don't touch my hair because
I don't want to know they're there, wrapped in tangles
dreadlocks with chewy centers.

I pull my clothes off by the washing machine
and start the hot rinse cycle immediately, reconciling
my guilt at running the washing machine
with only two items of clothing in it
with images of hordes of horrible soft bodies
tumbling through the soapy water with my clothes
hopefully boiled alive. If there were more clothes
in the mashing machine, the slugs would be trapped
throughout the load, might find sanctuary
in sweater pockets and socks
might make it out
alive.

My Places

All my favorite places have been overrun
by kids who look at me as though I'm
some old lady who lost her way, stumbled
into their club late at night on the way
to buy last-minute groceries or some important
old lady medication

all of my regular haunts are being haunted
by children who don't understand how important
these places are to me, children
who will grow up to become boring adults
have boring jobs, live boring lives
forget why they ever came to these places
and will wonder about
strange old ladies like me.

The Things That Need to Stay With Yesterday

I wake up and I
can still feel them in
me scratching my skin

with callused hands and
ragged nails get back
I mumble in my
sleep get back to be-
ing dead.

The Snowman

we drive our stakes and shovels through the heart
of the beast and pray for an end to
winter. we stomp on its head, kick its black coal eyes
far across the yard and take back our
old clothes from its body. no more snow,
we pray. no more cold.

the snowman lies where we kicked it down
arms outstretched in supplication, begging
for mercy against the onslaught of our
thick winter boots, lit torches
paper packets of early-sow seeds
held close to our chests in anticipation of spring.

Fred

the vampire stalks into my
room his eyes are big black holes
in his head he looms over me, claws
outstretched, the stench
of the undead on his breath. my heart
dies in my chest

at his approach, fangs bared
lower jaw quivering

in anticipation of my
surrender, of the inevitable
spurt of blood destined to stop my life
what I am—I don't want to
die here, not this way

About the Poet

Holly Day's poetry has recently appeared in *Asimov's Science Fiction*, *Grain*, and *Harvard Review*. Her newest poetry collections are *In This Place, She Is Her Own* (Vegetarian Alcoholic Press), *A Wall to Protect Your Eyes* (Pski's Porch Publishing), *Folios of Dried Flowers and Pressed Birds* (Cyberwit.net), *Where We Went Wrong* (Clare Songbirds Publishing), *Into the Cracks* (Golden Antelope Press), and *Cross Referencing a Book of Summer* (Silver Bow Publishing), while her newest nonfiction books are *Music Theory for Dummies* and *Tattoo FAQ*.