

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Francesca Bell: Four Poems

Francesca Bell · Wednesday, March 12th, 2014

Francesca Bell has had poems published in many journals, including *Rattle*, *burntdistrict*, *North American Review*, *Passages North*, *Poetry Northwest*, and *The Sun*. New work is forthcoming in *Prairie Schooner*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Flycatcher*, *River Styx*, and *Tar River Poetry*.

*All poems have been previously published.*

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## I Long to Hold the Poetry Editor's Penis in My Hand

and tell him personally,  
I'm sorry, but I'm going  
to have to pass on this.  
Though your piece  
held my attention through  
the first few screenings,  
I don't feel it is a good fit  
for me at this time.  
Please know it received  
my careful consideration.  
I thank you for allowing  
me to have a look,  
and I wish you  
the very best of luck  
placing it elsewhere.

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## Why I Don't Drink

Because drink is a man with eyes more ocean  
than sky, with wit, whose good humor surrounds  
him like fragrance, whose suits sit just right  
and don't wrinkle, who wants to pour himself  
into me and brings me books—the right books—  
and takes me to a hotel room above an exotic city,

and dresses me in silk just for the pleasure  
 of sliding it down, who enters me like a flush  
 of good fortune—who, it turns out, is married,  
 and likes to hang me over his knees and smack me  
 till the welts rise up burning,  
 and I spend a long time later,  
 bent funny before a mirror, straining  
 to see the bruises on my backside, wondering,  
 too late, if this was a price I wanted to pay.

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## Regrets

My husband isn't sure he wants a woman  
 willing to undress in public  
 every emotion that occurs to her.  
 He doesn't think I ought grind out  
 page after page of sorrow,  
 my voice like fingers  
 working a row of buttons.  
 What man, he wonders, would want  
 what is his laid bare for strangers,  
 the fabric of his life, also,  
 tossed off like lace.  
 But I need to strip  
 each layer covering me,  
 to feel myself take shape  
 in the open. He doesn't know  
 that for me, silence is a too-tight dress  
 I can't wait to escape.

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## The Yearning to Be Supple

Hips are the rain gutters of breath,  
 my yoga teacher says.  
 Where in the body, I wonder,  
 are grief's rain gutters?  
 Which part can I bend  
 into a sluice, sweating and straining,  
 to let sorrow slide through?

Make yourself soft,  
 the teacher says when I struggle.

She's young and can't imagine  
 I want to be soft the way  
 a drunk person is soft

when drink has made him oblivious  
to what the world can do,  
so the world can do nothing.  
He can hurl himself head-on  
into each inevitable tree and still manage  
his jaunty stagger from the scene.

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