Holly Prado

DREAM REPORT

A DREAM IN APRIL WHEN WE ALL DISCOVER SPRING

a cramped room: the chairs are the folding chairs from a cheap wedding or a 1940's piano recital. I'm older than the others who are here for a poetry reading. I carry my folder of poems as if I carry a lifetime of work they haven't done yet. I grumble, wanting a better audience.

one young woman asks me to find the bathroom with her, so we walk through this clattery building, looking for it. she's as blond as my own enthusiasm when I started to write. she asks me how to finish a poem in which the poet uses different versions of one idea. she uses the word "stretch," spreading her arms to mean stretching an image to give it as many meanings as possible. I feel her behind me in this narrow hallway, hovering and waiting, her hands apart.

what can ever be explained? yet, suddenly, her question excites me. the perfect answer gathers in my throat. I turn to her. I rattle my hands on her shoulders as if I can shake her into understanding. I shout, "the end of that kind of poem becomes what you've learned in the process of writing the poem itself!" I laugh. I've been holding this answer in me for a long time, but have never been able to push it into the air before. I notice that I don't have my folder of poems with me. I don't have my typewriter. I don't have my list of publications.

then I'm in a cave full of orange-red pillars: it's my creative world. the pillars shimmer from fiery passion to gentle crooning. they may be ancient odalisks or long bolts of fabric. I haven't seen this place before, but I'm showing a man through it. I know he cares for me, though he's a stranger. he guides me, silently, in the same way I lead him. we move and stare. I haven't realized the extensiveness of this creative belly that's so special, so glowing, so full of interstices and folds and crannies and shifting colors and possibilities. I make all the promises again.