

## **Francine Witte – Three Poems**

### **First, you went silhouette**

On your way to fading out,  
the red and blue and green  
of you dissolving down to  
a wash. And you weren't  
doing anything to save yourself,  
not calling for another chance,  
not showing up in our favorite song.  
You turned into a billow then,  
blowing into a filmy curtain  
on the first open window of spring,  
just the faintest hint of you, a last  
gasp of air, and me standing there  
holding my breath, letting it go...

### **Moving Day**

I tell the movers to be careful with the boxes  
of heartache and missed opportunities, though  
really, what's left inside them to break? To tell  
you the truth, I plunked everything into the cartons,  
taped them shut and hoped for some silence from  
their constant, screechy cries. The moving men  
hoist up the boxes. No eye contact. Not their job.  
All they are paid to do was move the corpse  
of my old life, and let it feather away in the wind.  
My job is to watch them drive my belongings  
to a newer life, broom this place clean of my  
moldy hopes, my rotted dreams. My job  
is to let the next tenant move in, full of hope,  
let him fill up the place with the smell of new paint  
and let the stench of me fade from the walls forever.

### **Like Love, Only Not**

You tell me there are rules for love  
and it's like any other game. That makes  
me wonder if your kiss is a rule, your touch --  
two things that always make me do what you want.  
Six months from now, six minutes, your watch

will be a rule, point you home and make you  
say you had a nice time. Nice is a word  
that fits the rules. Not like spectacular,  
which is way too Roman Circus and one  
of us would end up gladiator-dead.  
I guess it's okay. We live by so many rules.  
We alarm ourselves awake each day, let hunger  
tell us when to eat. It's all a bit like love,  
only not, because love should be the one place  
we follow our flying hearts, the one place we  
drift as free as leaves that fritter in a breeze.  
Only when you think of it, isn't that a rule?

**Francine Witte's** poetry and fiction have appeared in *Smokelong Quarterly*, *Wigleaf*, *Mid-American Review*, *Passages North*, and many others. Her latest books are *Dressed All Wrong for This* (Blue Light Press,) *The Way of the Wind* (AdHoc fiction,) and *(The Theory of Flesh.)* Her chapbook, *The Cake, The Smoke, The Moon* (flash fiction) will be published by ELJ September, 2021. She lives in NYC.