

HYPERALLERGIC

One Poem by Elisa Gonzalez

Our poetry editor, Wendy Xu, has selected one poem by Elisa Gonzalez for her monthly series that brings original poetry to the screens of Hyperallergic readers.

Wendy Xu | November 15, 2017



Anne Neely, "Cypher" (2017), oil on linen, 14 x 11 inches, featured in a solo exhibition at CUE Art Foundation, New York curated by Sarah Sze through December 16 (photo by Stewart Clement)

ESSAY ON INHERITANCE

What's half-certain: a father always multiplies and here
he is to teach you long division.
Shit. He's cut off his head.
Did you know he was going to do that?
Here's the doctor! But he's got his eyes
on *you*. He's shining the light in yours. It breaks
like a line does. See,
he understands a poem. He's never doubted
the blood in his body. The funeral
director's come. Gravedigger next.
A father's singular when dead
the way he should be. That
you're sure about. But who
will give the eulogy? Not someone
who erred her whole daughter life, who sits
grateful, alone on the stairs.
Thank the god who banned ghosts. Unfortunately,
you always took after your father—
see, a long time ago the doctor charted
the paths of blood.
But don't trust the doctor!
You have to cut off the head sometime,
so the Hydra proves.
Myth as reinforcement.
You speak with your very own mouth.
With your very own hands.

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Elisa Gonzalez is a writer of prose and poetry whose work appears in *Harvard Review*, *Lambda Literary Poetry Spotlight*, and elsewhere. A graduate of the New York University MFA program, she is a 2016–2017 Fulbright scholar in the arts.