

The Wishbone Conspiracy: A Fine Friday

By Holly Lisle

Spiffy, spiffy day today, though kind of horrifying, too. I followed Cady's situation to its logical conclusion, and she's **literally** up to her neck in one of those moments I would have previously identified as "bad," but which some of my readers have told me counts as horror.

Well, folks who have read and liked *Hunting the Corrigan's Blood* and *Warpaint* and are still will me for *The Wishbone Conspiracy* (working title) are made of stern stuff, and will get through this.

And having read through Ilona Andrews, I can state categorically that my "going dark" is not any grimmer than what she writes. (I know "she's" a husband/wife team, but the name is female and following a singular proper noun with a plural pronoun bugs the fuck out of me.)

On that working title...

Matt just finished re-reading *Hunting the Corrigan's Blood* for the sole purpose of brainstorming titles, and came up with a better title that fits the series. And did it by using Badger's poem at the end of the book.

My eyes still filled with unshed tears,
I face the path where darkness crept
Before me, taking everything
I once held dear and stripping from
Me joy's frail wings.

Death stalks after.
Stillness follows

All of Life's unceasing chatter;
If I win still I shall lose.
Life's failures are but little deaths
That slink before.

Where once I flew now I must walk
And stumble over stones and roots;
Taste dust and ashes on my tongue
And bleed as failure's weight
Drives me to ground.

Wait. Knowing that I too must die
And fall at last beyond the reach
Of light and love and laughter I
Become unburdened: I become
Life's renegade.

I who have nothing left to lose
Must now have everything to gain
And driven down must now burst free,
And take from Life what Life won't give:
I own my soul.

Life's a miser; death's a thief that
Steals Life's bread when darkness falls.
I'll shame the thief; I will not weep
But, head high, stand and fight and bleed.
I will not call death friend; I will
Not ask for softness; I will not
Embrace the empty, silent night –
And when I lose, as I must lose –

With neck unbowed and back unbent,
I'll run the path where darkness creeps
And scream and shout and pound the walls
And death will cringe to hear me come –
And Life, well-lived,
Will weep.

The story behind that poem is here.

Using the same poem, I came up with a better title for *Warpaint*, and a better title for *Wishbone* as well.

Going to keep them secret for now.

I need to get some cold, hard split-testing numbers to see which are more marketable, because no matter what I happen to like, the title that encourages people to buy the book is the title that gets to go on the cover. And when I get the split tests set up, I don't want any hint of which title I might prefer floating around influencing people and messing up the voting.

Anyway... Got 2009 words, ended the chapter on an awesome cliffhanger, and am looking forward to getting back to this story next Wednesday.

Meanwhile, however, now I have to get work done on the *How to Write a Novel* launch.

It's getting close and I still have a lot of work to do.

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If I Brought Lambs

By Holly Lisle

The novel *LAST GIRL DANCING* was born as *IF I BROUGHT LAMBS*, on 9/1/96, with the following poem that I wrote. I've included the whole page, because initially each chapter was supposed to be preceded by a poem from the killer, and, finding it this morning, I thought the header was kind of funny. Along with

this poem, I just discovered the synopsis for that previous version of the story.

The core idea so horrified my then-agent that he told me the book could never sell, and the core idea is what finally sold, though through a different agent. Which goes to show that different agents have different opinions of the same things.

Here's the page:

*A Collection of Psycho Poetry for
IF I BROUGHT LAMBS*

TITLE POEM

*if i brought lambs, lambs
to slaughter, my fairest Carida,
would you feed me
would you make me
sweet stews from the livers,
rich pies from the kidneys

or would you chastise me
Carida, Carida
for killing the tender young lambs?*

The poetry didn't make it to LAST GIRL DANCING. The killer did. So I thought I'd share the poetry, too, as an odd aside.

I'll note that this is the only Psycho Poem I wrote for the book—the problem with including psycho poetry is that to get it, you have to be your own psycho. Ugh.

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Wow! The stuff you find!

By Holly Lisle

I've been gradually integrating the archives on the weblog. It's an enormous, messy project, and I've been doing it from oldest posts to newest, about a week at a time. I'd forgotten how long **Talyn** was a project before it became a book. I'd forgotten what a brutal time I had writing **The Wreck of Heaven**. And I *completely* forgot that I ever wrote this.

Holy shit! This has to be a book. I can't believe I just left it lying around back there and wandered on to other things.

Checking the archives from time to time is evidently a pretty good idea.

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Asking a Favor

By Holly Lisle

Does anyone have a copy of "Pensive Ruminations on Impermanence in a Technophilic World," Aboriginal, #31-#32, Summer, 1992? (poem)

I don't have a copy anymore, and have tried like hell to remember the thing, and can't. I'd like to put the thing up on the website along with To an Android Lover

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Good days happen

By Holly Lisle

Good days happen

Without warning, after bad days, in spite of too much sun or rain

Laughter bursts out of dark corners and explodes whole rooms

Clearing cobwebs with astonishing speed

Dread wearies of itself, and falls exhausted to the floor,

Overcome by its own mutterings, melodramatic in its flung pose

Good news sneaks in over the transom, under the shutters, between the cracks

Surprising in unexpected places, un hoped-for ways

Good days happen

Good days do not wait for big things

For fine news

For miracles

Good days are like a seeded lawn – much nothing

Followed by a bit of something

And like the growing grass, good days don't change the world

But they smell fine when you mow them, and you can lie on a good day

And watch the clouds float overhead

Good days smell like after the rain,

Pie in the oven,

New-mown hay,

Sweet feed for horses,

Autumn leaves.

*Good days grace us with sharp cold air
– Thinking air –
And snowfield silence
And apple-blossom beauty
And anchor us to life, and tether us tight to good dark
ground
When we're in danger of falling off
And so we can go on.*

For Zette, Andi, and June, orchestrators of much of my good day, with thanks for the surprise.

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And apropos of nothing

By Holly Lisle

Another poem I dug off my hard drive, this one really short. Wrote it for a character that I have not yet used, back on June 6, 1999. It will eventually go into the book that I'm working around the character that sprang from this poem, but here's the poem, well in advance.

EPITAPH OF A LOVE

*Any life so bursting at the seams
Must be replete with joy,
 He said,
So he moved in.*

And now he does not like the clutter.

Oh ... and Seven Accursed

By Holly Lisle

I wrote a variant of this poem a while back, just because. I was digging through old material for plot ideas, found it, and came up with a humdinger. I had to rewrite the poem as both it and the story evolved, but, here it is.

Seven Accursed

*We are now fallen, we who dreamed –
We seven who once strode through Hell,
We who breached the citadels
Of mighty gods and called them ours.
We are now fallen, we who dreamed.*

*None will speak our names again;
The holy places shun our souls
We chose the path of dark and lost
And Dark has come to claim its due.
None will speak our names again.*

*Dare not the summits of the gods –
These places do not welcome men,
Devour them and throw them down
And leave bleached bones as testament.
Dare not the summits of the gods.*

*Now I raise my shattered sword
To summon gods I scorned before –*

*Summon Grief and Vanity;
Call on Hubris, and Remorse.
Now I raise my shattered sword.*

*We are now fallen, we who dreamed –
We seven who once strode through Hell,
We who breached the citadels
Of mighty gods and called them ours.
We are now fallen, we who dreamed.*

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