

Life, Well Lived, Will Weep

[By Holly Lisle](#)

*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
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.

from **Hunting the Corrigan's Blood**, Copyright © 1997

You'll find **Life, Well Lived, Will Weep** in **Hunting the Corrigan's Blood**

I wrote this poem at the turn-around from a serious low point in my life – in fact, writing the poem marked the turn-around. Within a period of seven months, from August of 1994 to April 1995, I'd found out that the kids' father, my ex, had been abusing them on his weekends and I'd moved them away from the town where they were born, only to have my marriage to my second husband crash after he and I had bought a house. I moved away from him and the house, taking the kids, the cats, and the computer, and losing most everything else we owned in the process – and to top it all off, my parents walked out of my life. I was broke, I was scared, and I hit bottom, wallowing in depression and serious self-pity.

And then the basic themes of this poem came to me, and I wrote them down, and printed the poem out and taped it to the wall beside my computer, and said "To hell with this. I'm fighting." I read the poem out loud to myself before I wrote every day, sometimes going over the last two verses a couple of times. And I wrote or co-wrote four books in the period of the year that followed that, and with Matt's support dug myself part of the way out of the hole I was in, and my kids

and I started rebuilding our lives.

One of the books I wrote in that period was **Hunting the *Corrigan's Blood***, and I gave the poem to Badger to write about Cadence Drake, the protagonist. I'd hoped someone else might find courage in it.

And it's posted here for the same reason.

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