

[Athena Kildegaard: Three “Still Life” Poems](#) [1]

March 30, 2015 [Digital Poets and Nature](#) [2]

Still Life with Oil Rig

From a distance it could be a landscape, the vanishing point beyond the table's far edge, past the flocked wallpaper. A vase of sunflowers, a well of black ink, a glove, the right hand, palm down, as if the hand itself had gone on to smooth some other surface, and a compass upright and gouged into the table's faint grain. It casts a shadow, a thin line that bumps into the glass of the ink. All are arranged to appear inevitable.



Still Life with Contrail

From a distance, across a high-ceilinged white room, the painting, a terminus of stretched canvas, looks like a simple mathematical equation. But move in so you can see brush strokes. Then all of it dissipates, the white peonies fall and fall, petals tinged blue lengthen into wings, shadows of a two-tined fork veer toward the horizon, the salmon on its wooden board flips as if a current has taken it, has pulled it across the table and over the edge.

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Still Life with Passenger Pigeons

There's a story here: cracked pepper spilled across the table, a slammed door, the door roaring against its frame and then gasping shut, a reverberation in the pale room, just as though a stage direction—a larum!—had been shouted across the room. What remains: a glass shaker fallen onto the pink cloth, pepper thrown, a galaxy, a startled flock, a Braille riddle.



Art Information

- "[Peony Oil On Canvas](#) [3] [4]" © Cheryl Grayum; Creative Commons license.
- "[Contrails 2](#) [5]" © Rauchbier; Creative Commons license.



Athena Kildegaard lives and teaches in Morris, Minnesota. She's the author of three books of poetry.

Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in the *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Barn Owl Review*, *Grist*, *Zone 3*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *Literary Bohemian*, *Tar River Poetry*, and elsewhere.

Athena read the poems here and others at TW's "[Digital Poets and Nature](#)" [6] panel for the AWP 2015 conference in Minneapolis.

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Links:

[1] <https://talkingwriting.com/athena-kildegaard-three-%E2%80%9Cstill-life%E2%80%9D-poems>

[2] <https://talkingwriting.com/tw-channels-and-categories/digital-poets-and-nature>

[3] <https://www.flickr.com/photos/cowgirl111/4945043183>

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[5] <https://www.flickr.com/photos/rauchbier/5634465230/in/photolist-9zU7df-9H1CzE-dUmR2x-cmRXg1-e86Rqt-9pYEkS-b8oeuZ-8KFFBx-bjWGg-6wYdDk-6cGCyH-p5TdnS-qc4rWB-4b3odF-f7pMie-pziduK-bLXtsR-nUpAB-8WTqZx-daDB6W-dr9xeL-osRhwB-aqDaZj-81Bznc-rbndpL-fzpggho-kQKUte-bvJyDk-fEkinL-91jnPg-nUpUv-bkro6S-ejrgeE-rbuDux-sGh6z-hHCqHq-pdeLdr-DjPMz-gfh5mK-aeSxbL-aeQ9Ra-aTv1MR-6x3ozj-e32NcG-ftYxA4-auTtSD-mRXM86-5YZtHq-gfgv77-bCsA4x>

[6] https://www.awpwriter.org/awp_conference/event_detail/2934