

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## **Exhaling**

By Patricia L. Hamilton

A rare morning finds me  
alone at the breakfast table

gazing at winter's rampage  
across my backyard:

azaleas blasted brown by an arctic front,  
no more buds waiting to burgeon;

dead hydrangea blooms like scribbled  
mops of hair on stick-figure stems.

I let out a slow breath  
and notice the bleached lawn is sunlit.

The tip of a squirrel's tail waves  
wildly, a cheerleader's pompom.

Two cardinals perch on a branch,  
round, red whole notes on a staff.

Somewhere a neighborhood dog  
erupts, barking in syncopation

to the slow tick of the kitchen clock,  
the steady beat of my heart.