

Christopher Reilly

The Last Vestige

At the moment of Death,
Your worldview,
As complex and fragile as it was -
A unique thing
In all the universe -
Collapses,
A pricked water balloon.

Little remains
But shreds of you,
Left behind in the memories
Of others.
You are defined
By the shadow cast
Of your stories
And their sorrow.

And then those stories -
Fade.

The last to go
Are those memories
Held close to the heart
By those who loved you
Best.

And then they are gone,
And it is only
The grand-children
Who recall
A fraction
Of the fullness
Of your life.

On a day
And in a moment
That nobody knows,
The last vestige
Of you winks out
With the death
Of the last person
Who knew your name

Two-time Pushcart nominee **Christopher Reilley** is the former poet laureate of Dedham, MA. His third collection, *One Night Stanzas*, is now available from Big Table Publishing.