

Kelley White – Two Poems

Epiphytes

last week I didn't even know
I had knees, walked my two miles
a day, rode my bike; now they scream
at me in complete alarm, and my life
is changed, this small thing,
to learn so abruptly
I have arthritis
I am old
I have not managed things well

Wintering

And where have you gone Grandfather?
Through the spring mist, across your own
time, troubled by your youthful war;
we stand within our own time shared only
with your dead. Will my children forget
where we went, the pond, its water
troubled by insects and rainbows? The star
heavened night we lifted our eyes to
aurora's flickering flame beyond the fields
in Northern skies? How was I to know
I'd only see this once? That this thing we'd
share just once, that never again will a night
without cities or alarms be mine. No, we have
only one night to float between starlight
and dark water. There will be no other now
with you gone into some yet unknown
arena of nightmare or calm. I have only
his jackknife, his compass, his faded boy
scout sash now carefully mounted under glass
as safe-keeping for another generation.
Foolish to think a child of this, our own
home century, would want them. Relics of
another time and place where we live with
outrage, limping through red black and blue
alarm. Did I mention alarm, or still call
only upon new nights? When we might yet
augment the mystery we carry when we call
on your name. I remember my pride in you
and your great grandchildren will know
it. Will they ignore our hopes to hold on?

Pediatrician **Kelley White** has worked in inner-city Philadelphia and rural New Hampshire. Her poems have appeared in *Exquisite Corpse*, *Rattle* and *JAMA*. Her recent books are *Toxic Environment* (Boston Poet Press) and *Two Birds in Flame* (Beech River Books). She received a 2008 Pennsylvania Council on the Arts grant.