

This False Compare

poems by Andrew Cox

Number 27 in the 2River Chapbook Series

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***This False Compare*, poems by Andrew Cox**

About the Author

Andrew Cox is the author of *The Equation that Explains Everything* (BlazeVOX Books, 2010), the chapbook, *Fortune Cookies* (2River, 2009), and the hypertext chapbook *Company X* (Word Virtual). Cox edits the *UCity Review*.

About the Artist

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About 2River

Since 1996, 2River has been a site of poetry and art, quarterly publishing *The 2River View* and occasionally publishing individual authors in the 2River Chapbook Series. 2River is also the home of Muddy Bank, the 2River blog.

Richard Long, Editor
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Anti-: "Drugs Poison Him that So Fell Sick of You"

Blackbox Manifold: "For Truth Proves Thievish for a Prize So Dear," "That on Himself Such Murd'rous Shame Commits" and "The Hardest Knife Ill Us'd Doth Lose His Edge"

Blue Fifth Review: "You Had a Father, Let Your Son Say So"

Love's Fire Heats Water, Water Cools Not Love

Shakespeare, sonnet 154

Shame fools no one it wears water for pants
And who is it that wades through the muck
And steps towards the daughter who says
Stop that is not fit talk at the dinner table

Why does this floor pitch and why does sleep
Always come at a cost we are not willing to pay
And those stooping shoulders what do they matter

Clapping comes at the end but it is not because
We were happy about what we just heard
Collect your money for passing go
But it hurts this not understanding each move

Now only three lines are left to explain why
Some float and some sink and some say
This was not what I thought would happen

As Any She Belied with False Compare

Shakespeare, sonnet 130

This false compare this street smart kid this pill you take
To make you happy this happiness itself this stepsister
And the janitor who always reminded you that sadness
Held a broom and swept the floors this clock
With its spiders and webs this statue in the town square

This thing blowing up bigger than a hot air balloon
This thing about to burst and the street at night
When everyone has gone to bed or is not coming home
This car on concrete blocks this house in ill-repair
With the ditch out front and a mailbox with its open mouth

This rusted swing set this useless slide like a tired tongue
This manicured lawn this nervous laughter this heart
And its clogged arteries this bar on the outskirts
With its jukebox and songs that play on and on

B O D Y: "Love's Fire Heats Water, Water Cools Not Love"

Corium Magazine: "To Eat the World's Due, by Grave and by Thee" and "As with Your Shadow I with These Did Play"

Hamilton Stone Review: "I Will Not Praise that Purpose Not to Sell," "To Hear with Eyes Belongs to Love's Fine Wit," and "That Every Tongue Says Beauty Should Look So"

Unsplendid: "As Any She Belied with False Compare"

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That Every Tongue Says Beauty Should Look So

Shakespeare, sonnet 127

One word after another panic followed by attack
Smack followed by down high followed by five
Slang followed by profane followed by smug

One injury after another one voice over
Followed by a tracking shot of a girl riding a bike
Followed by a close up of someone's arm in a cast

One worn out moment followed by a lightning strike
Followed by the man learning how to skate
And the woman about to wreck her car

One river flowing into another one campsite
Abandoned after another one sweet breath
Followed by a something hiding under the bed

One word after another bad followed by luck
No followed by doubt help followed by me

Drugs Poison Him that So Fell Sick of You

Shakespeare, sonnet 118

Pretend you are not taking this
Pretend you did not wash it down with that amber drink
And pretend you are not here with these people
Where slacks and a tight sweater
Talk to penny loafers with no socks and a gold chain

Pretend winter arrives inside you while a summer dress
Kisses a mustache that belongs to someone else
Pretend the snow is falling while shorts and a muscle shirt
Sashay across the deck with a string of pearls

Pretend you are a blizzard and everyone else
Is what they wear and what they don't say
And what they look like to the babysitter

Pretend you are a white out while everyone else
Waits for the tan and toothsome grin

Cover Art

Formal Relationships © 2019 by Mark E. Flowers

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As with Your Shadow I with These Did Play

Shakespeare, sonnet 98

They line up the ones who think they have something to say
Waiting for their turn to watch home movies
And the mothers come home tipsy
To the cats at the door waiting to go out for the night
While someone tells someone else they are moody
The meaning of which sets sail to take advantage of the wind
To sail through the sludge of our muddled thinking
Out there on the great expanse no one to help us
When there's no father to say hello dear glad you made it home
And the children are just kids in the sandbox
Who will decide when they grow up through the garbled voices
Whether they will use needles or not
As the pain like a sky filled with a cloud shaped like a nose
Sniffs out the sadness no one sees shuffling up the street

The Hardest Knife Ill Us'd Doth Lose His Edge

Shakespeare, sonnet 95

I keep erasing the next line because it can't stop looking at itself
In the mirror and maybe if I got new glasses my edge would stop
Roaming the streets looking for someone who would appreciate
What it hides in its pockets and if I could find a way to stop
Talking to myself in the third person then the wind would find
What I threw in the lake where the fish gorge and can't stop
Eating each other's young and if I could just get my edge back
Then the second person and the bowtie it wears would stop
Turning my friends against the beanie and its propeller
Because no one believes cause and effect will find a way to stop
Its attack on the first person and if I would just learn to quit
Wishing all that noise outside would find a way to stop
So I could get some sleep and get myself back into shape
For the day when this off key singing in my chest will stop

To Eat the World's Due, by Grave and by Thee

Shakespeare, sonnet 1

Today I offer to carry everyone's sadness and deliver it
To the door of the room in the hotel called Vacancy
Where they can unpack it and hang it in the closet
To wait for the day they intend to wear it on their sleeve
Cuff links and all with a matching tie and remember the tip
And how it made them feel they had done me a favor
Today I offer to stand by and wait with hand out
And accept whatever they give me in this tired uniform and silly hat
And shoes that know the way to every room
Where the floors have accommodated all the pacing
And have no idea what the walls think and why the ceilings
Are stained and cracked and laughing behind everyone's back
Today I offer to haul the sadness until the rooms are full
And the hotel changes its name to No Vacancy

That on Himself such Murd'rous Shame Commits

Shakespeare, sonnet 9

A single missed chance defines the shoes someone wears
A mirror erases the need to carry on a two-way conversation
A juvenile delinquent snatches purses inside the 50 year old man
A chin patch and a too-tight t-shirt do what they can to help
A broken promise joins the others and tells an unfunny joke
A house turned inside out equals bad pictures passed off as art
A breakfast and a few phone calls do not buy a prom dress
A pair of high-top sneakers would tell all if allowed to talk

The ending is uncertain but will no doubt be one of getting even
The message came in garbled and carried with it the unexplained
The mean-spirited nickname suited well and yet still wasn't enough
The missed chance and the mirror equal a man who drives a toy car
The nothing he was is the nothing he is when he starts to talk

Lilies that Fester Smell Far Worse than Weeds

Shakespeare, sonnet 94

Small talk found itself without a date
And everyone is disappointed in slow dances
Yet the music had all these ducks in a row
And the fake waterfall dumps its load over the cliff
The tattoos on ankles and diamonds in pierced ears
Rode to the party in limousines with black windows
While small talk stays in with home movies
And an urge to think about what happened

So this is where I take you somewhere different
Somewhere where the looming above your head
Presses down until you wonder what it is
You are supposed to hold up and why you care
And how it is small talk came to the forefront
Of everything you believed went wrong

In Sleep a King, But Waking No Such Matter

Shakespeare, sonnet 87

Any morning and its face in the mirror
And the way the unexplainable stares back at you

Any morning as someone stands on their head
Because the legs need the rest though the day
Has only just now decided to put on its pants

Any morning with its early risers
And the birds like jesters who will not shut up
Though motley is nowhere to be found
And the daughters do not attack the father

Any morning with its corny promise
And the mirrors that have stopped working
And the unexplainable that needs coffee
And the birds like jesters who have something to say
And the king who never wanted to be king

You Had a Father, Let Your Son Say So

Shakespeare, sonnet 13

I stared at the title too long and knew what settled on my chest
Was my reluctance to use the first person
And to acknowledge the ladder that leans against the wall

Rung after rung takes us to the roof where we can see
What we don't want to see backyards and dogs roaming a fence
A car parked in the driveway where someone's daughter
Bends over to create a scene for the cutting room floor

I sometimes remember my father's hairline and the way
He got angry about what he read in the newspaper
And how white he was when he talked to me via a note

Rung after rung and we find ourselves looking down
On where we are now and when we look up
The redshift we see reminds us
It is time to embrace the first person

I Will Not Praise that Purpose Not to Sell

Shakespeare, sonnet 21

Someone says she's AC/DC and it means she goes both ways
But does each direction take her where she wants to go
Where someone will say hey baby or damn girl
Or yes I will make you breakfast

And what's it like going in both directions at once
Is it like being in a cartoon
Where your legs wind up like propellers
Before you take off and whoosh down the road

So to praise the dark lady she conjures
All she learned going both directions at once
Where someone will say hey baby or damn girl

To praise the mysterious youth she conjures the place
Where your legs wind up like propellers
Before you take off and whoosh down the road

From Me Far Off, with Others All Too Near

Shakespeare, sonnet 61

Too much excitement for one day wonders where
That laughing is coming from and when an afternoon nap
Will come home from its morning of secret errands

Far off a briefcase walks into a solid state building
And let's the elevator take it up to the floor
Where what waits has an extra Y chromosome

Others all too near are on their way to meet
Long hair and a pierced nose for an afternoon of fun
Where clothes have a life of their own

And now the shoes and purse swallow the pill
That makes everything ok while the gold chain
Places a bet on who has the whitest teeth

Laughter saunters up the street confident that no one
Knows where it's been or what it's been doing

For Truth Proves Thievish for a Prize So Dear

Shakespeare, sonnet 48

What we wait for comes home with her many faces
And her secrets like fat apples that wait in a bag
With the promise juice will run down our chin
But we do not understand what happened
Or what we did to make her panic
And pull to the side of the road in dread
And it does not matter our sadness the rocket ship
Blew up in midair making heroes of all it contained
Something she went through the paste called the past
Said in its steady voice nothing will be the same after this
And not twins nor the house suffering from dowdiness
Can make the trajectory of a car on a highway
Take any course but home and what waits there
Us ready to talk and hoping it won't fall on deaf ears

To Hear with Eyes Belongs to Love's Fine Wit

Shakespeare, sonnet 23

To taste with nose to hear with eyes to touch with ears
To see where we are going with extended hand
To let the fingers shout hell no that never happened

And that fine wit with one foot in the gutter
Whose leg does it belong to what pair of pants
And worn out shoes are waiting for the feet to talk

To stand still with moving arms to walk on knees
To move to the front while flat on your back
To flap elbows and never lift off the ground

And that fine wit standing on its head
Whose crown should it wear what shirt
And tired socks are waiting for this to end

To touch with eyes to taste with ears to hear with nose
To let the fingers shout hell no this did not happen

Where I May Not Remove, nor Be Removed

Shakespeare, sonnet 25

He is the one who wanted to remove himself
From the room where to rise is to understand
There is no accounting for the way the window
Only does a half decent job reminding us to look
At what we are missing when we sneeze and how
The turban who lives three houses down is the same
As the facelift two blocks over and the coefficient
Of the chemicals that live in the apartment complex
Begin the important job of thawing the tundra
And as the part stands for the whole the wind
Says the F word and the number eleven
Quits its pouting and decides to pick up its toys
And the one who removed himself feels regret
But has no idea how to reenter the empty room

All Losses Are Restor'd, and Sorrows End

Shakespeare, sonnet 30

That sigh you hear is nothing but what and its entourage
While when rides a pony at the fair and why
Waits for the earthquake to come and say no
You're never going to understand what happened

That shout you hear is not because someone is in trouble
And the far-off sirens fade in and out for something
That has a mind of its own and has decided
To pout and not eat its vegetables for dinner

That regret you taste is a reminder to leave her alone
And remember you don't want x-ray vision
Because you don't want to see what's on the film

That relief you taste is nothing but an attempt
To deal with the decisions you made under duress
And know you can still grin and that's enough