

# This False Compare

poems by Andrew Cox



number 27 in the 2River Chapbook Series



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## **2River**

[www.2River.org](http://www.2River.org)

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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"

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*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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# Cover Art

*Formal Relationships* © 2019 by Mark E. Flowers

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## **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

## **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

## 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

## 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



## **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

## **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

## **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

## The Hardest Knife III 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

## **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

## **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

## **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

## **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



## 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

## ***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**

Mark Flowers has exhibited his work throughout the United States and Europe. His work can be found in 26 public and over 300 private collections.

### **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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