

Elizabeth Ehrlich – Two Poems

Reunion

Accomplishments too
scanty at my age
are all I have to wear

What prey we stalked
like hungry cats at night
I thought I might recall

At the cash bar
it comes to me I drank
too much back then

All the ones I long
to see are dead
and no one knows me

which, like greasy
food on the buffet
is lukewarm comfort

Outage

You call as the lights go out
I hear the land line ringing
In the cellar with a torch I
squint at a circuit breaker

I still have real fuses—glass plugs
in a box—and lightbulbs with filaments,
and somewhere, a phone with a rotary dial
that worked in every emergency

I click the metal switches on
to off and back again
ascend to the kitchen, knees
creaky as basement stairs

In every room a bowl of night
is spilled, it overflows

like cream of wheat in the microwave
when you turn your back

I put on boots and hat, the warm
one you left behind, and walk
to the corner where a flash
asks and answers red against the dark

I've always loved and feared
this sort of thing: cherry pickers in the sky
men in safety suits detangling
wires from broken limbs

That blighted old tree dying
all those years came down at last
and took our power with it

Where are you says a bubble of text
on the cell phone screen. I'd left it
near my dinner plate, amidst
the dry leaves of junk mail
I called you every way I could

Elizabeth Ehrlich is the author of *Miriam's Kitchen: A Memoir*, which won a National Jewish Book Award and a Washington Irving Book Award. Her work has appeared in *Sudden Flash Youth* (Persea Press) and *Tipton Poetry Journal*. Ehrlich, who lives in Westchester County, NY, has twice been a resident fellow of Virginia Center for Creative Arts.