

Keith Tornheim – Four Poems

Afterimage

for Aaron Seidman

July 4th—fireworks,
flashes of light and then they're gone.
The day before, your light was extinguished,
but your face is an afterimage,
burned in the retinas of my memory.

Mourning Rain

for Aaron Seidman

It was raining when we drove to the cemetery,
as though the heavens were weeping with us.
It paused when we arrived
and just long enough for us
to shovel the earth upon your casket,
recite the mourner's Kaddish
and return to our cars.
Then the weeping began again,
from the clouds as from our eyes.

When Two Become One

There are stars that wink out,
and sometimes one is half of a binary system,
a pair that revolved around each other.
Now the second is alone
and must try to explain to their planets
why half the light is gone.

Buck

for David Lang

He might have built a new kinetic sculpture
where a matchbox car hits a plastic deer
that then arcs on a rod to hit a second car.
With his droll sense of humor,
he might have called it
"The Buck Stops Here."

However, he will never build it
or any other for our delight,
for on a rural road in Weston,
he was driving the second car.

Keith Tornheim, a biochemistry professor at Boston University School of Medicine, has five recent books, *I Am Lilith, Dancer on the Wind; Spirit Boat: Poems of Crossing Over; Can You Say Kaddish for the Living?; Fireflies: Poems of Love and Family*; and *Spoiled Fruit: Adam and Eve in Eden and Beyond*. His poems have appeared in *Ibbetson Street, The Somerville Times, Boston Literary Magazine, Muddy River Poetry Review* and *Poetica*