

## Poem: Considering Old Photographs of a Nearby Place

*Eric Edwards*

Everything in it is gone,  
except what the light caused.  
The roots that half-fed the trunk  
against whose skin this woman is leaning,  
invisibly disappeared into darkness...  
or perhaps some part of this was reborn  
into something else, or some one,  
or simply weighs down the air  
we are breathing toward the picture.

Those crazy photons  
zipping at maximum speed  
all over the place  
agitated silver to the quick –  
and the dead live on, haunting.

The photograph is such a thin  
sheet, like a magical unleavened cracker,  
it causes hunger.



From the Hibbard/Romer Family Album. ca. 1925.

We cannot retie the bow  
 in this young girl's hair...  
 or press down the cowlick on his head.  
 Was this really a good picnic  
 after the pose?  
 Was it a long, beautiful day?

Do we get to say  
 to our own children  
 "you are as they were,  
 happy in the light?"

No one in these photographs exists anymore.  
 And if love failed them  
 at some point

yet will they not be saved a little  
 by your loving regard now.

Their likeness is to Peter Pan  
 and Wendy –  
 all we touch is the dust  
 some believing fairy glued  
 onto this page  
 that lets us fly beyond yesterday.

If only we could ever say,  
 staring into the past so cleanly,  
 "we are looking at the future."

Eric Edwards is a Woods Hole poet



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