

Two Poems by Richard Luftig

The Abandoned Cemetery Out Past the County Road

The gravel entryway has all gone
to weeds and the hinges of the front gate
have rusted shut. It makes no difference,

though, in this place where day after
day the dead recede while the living
move closer to town. But the young

still visit leaving their beer bottles
and spent condoms scattered
like breadcrumbs in the forest;
the lasting evidence of lost, first loves.

What's left of the tombstones,
the borrowers and settlers
of these flatlands, have been

sandblasted by the prairie winds.
and the mole crickets are the only ones
clicking their tongues in the night,
but even they will be gone by autumn

leaving what's left of us
to remember that the risk of being
forgotten is the grave fact of life.

Light Years

By the time it takes us
to read this, suns a billion

years old, have made
their exits, collapsing

into their own black
holes of spent light.

Meteors have split
and broken away

from planets like grown
children declaring

and orbits of their own,
while whole galaxies

have returned to dust.
How long, my love,

will ours linger about
us before reaching

out to seemed certitude
of those most distant stars?

Richard Luftig is a past professor of educational psychology and special education at Miami University in Ohio, who now resides in California. He is a recipient of the Cincinnati Post-Corbett Foundation Award for Literature and a semi-finalist for the Emily Dickinson Society Award. His poems have appeared in numerous literary journals in the United States and internationally in Japan, Canada, Australia, Europe, Thailand, Hong Kong and India. One of his poems was nominated for the 2012 Pushcart Poetry Prize. He and his wife just celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.