

*Chase Twichell***The Late Comers**

I paid a dollar fifty
for this scrapbook,
these lives asleep in their
patina of dusts and molds.
Despite time's fixatives,
the woman on a bicycle
might have been me,
treading the heavy water
of an uphill ride —
had I been born
in 1910 instead of 1950.

I flip the pages, sparking
the dim detonations
of memory that must be false:
the man and dog
crouch beside a deer,
its head propped on a forked stick.
The baby blurs the moment,
the house drowns in roses.

What if life is nothing
but a series of triggers,
yes/no, right/left, on/off,
like the innards of a calculator?
So that saying a thing one way
eliminates all other ways forever?
That can't be true, can't be true
sing the wheels of the bicycles,
hers and mine,
turning only and always forward,
already late, like us, for something.