

## Two Poems · *Michael Heffernan*

### A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

Father liked reading Wordsworth in the bathroom  
in a great voice, pitching his vagrant tent  
among the unfenced regions of his brain.  
He hated Wordsworth like a pestilence.  
One of his favorite tactics of derision  
was to recite the scriptures mockingly.  
There was a tang of mockery in the air,  
a vibrancy of mockery through the door.  
Once he was at this long enough, maybe  
the better part of a good hour or so,  
another sound would rise amid the din  
of his locution, curling onto it  
and then all through it like a wisp of smoke,  
as from another life we both had lived,  
a bar in Ensenada where the beer  
was kept in ice in buckets on the table  
and the smoke hung like a blue veil over us,  
wavering when she walked in from the street  
to sit beside the window in the stillness  
after the laughter and the songs died down.