

Butterflies in the Water

PAUL MITCHELL

There's nothing new under the sun.
Except for the sun reflected on a lake
and into my daughter's eyes.

And her question's kind of new:
Is the sun in the water a twin?
Her eyes so full of light tell me
there are quadruplets here.

At the water's edge her innocence
isn't new, just dated theory.
Her guilt is even older.
But that waving hand
and smile are timeless.

Or are they?

Daughter tip-toeing the shallows,
will you love me when I'm older?
Will you love me when I'm cement,
just memory? Will you love me

when the sun gives back its power
to a light that's even stronger,
when there's no need
for caterpillars 'cause we've become
the butterflies I said we'd be?

Come into the water, Daddy!

I kick off my shoes and smile at her,
flap my arms and run . . .

[Paul Mitchell is an Australian poet and the author of *minorphysics* (2003).]