

Dread and Circuses

by Gary Hardaway

What hope is left is slightly bitter.
We sip it, mornings, carefully
and without savor- just enough to fortify
against the long day's dread and tedium.

It is claimed we choose
conditions of our servitude.
What choice exists is narrow
and tightens around the neck
as the leash-man spits out "Heel!"
(in so many words) and pulls us
in a random new direction that leaves us
breathing just enough to follow.

Home again, we pop a Keystone Light,
microwave a frozen pizza, and watch
the oversaturated colors of the news,
torn between the painted faces
and the crawling millipede of text.

