

# Malaise

*by Gary Hardaway*

## **Sermons and Lessons**

There are those who endure,  
those who succumb, and- pulling

strings on and off stage- the ones  
who enjoy the spectacle

of those who endure and succumb.  
Endurance wears the soul thin.

The hour to succumb ticks ever closer.  
The masters smile, anticipating

another collapse as the next scene  
in their ancient morality play.

## **When Trust Is Rare**

Lately, I dismiss the faces I meet until  
their words speak themselves visible.

Even then, I deny distinctive wrinkles,  
moles, asymmetrical flecks of color

in the eyes, until actions speak, clearer  
than words. Unstable times demand

a wariness stability would strip away.  
Everyone is adversary until one isn't.

## **The Work Week**

He wakes , Monday, with its  
baggage of dread and is  
exhausted, consumed, as always,  
by precarity and boredom.

The day promises, as every other,  
a routine of groveling  
and the threat of termination-  
the paired delights of menial employment.

Routines empower the resistance to  
fatigue and energize the coffee and shower.  
The drive is short enough and the  
commute predictable as sunrise.

