

# Oblique in an Acute New Century

*by* Gary Hardaway

## **No New Pictures, Please**

My photogenics went to hell  
in 1999. The cameras

ever since have pictured me  
with too much resolution and fidelity.

My old face couldn't face  
the new age with cheerful acquiescence.

## **Cultural Conspiracy**

It is a small life, circumscribed  
by debt and income, age and infirmity.  
The Hidden Hand thrusts its middle finger  
high. Fortuna spins her wheel and cackles.

## **His Allergies Are Bad Today**

Variety, spice, life—  
ingredients of a vast despair  
if allergic.

## **Juggler**

Fatigue already lowers the amplitude  
of the five cleavers circling between

myself and the audience of bored strangers.  
They remain, in hope of a little spatter

when entropy predominates  
and the whole little enterprise ends

with accelerating disorder  
and stillness.

### **Discomfiture**

The places I can be and want to be  
diminish. Chairs no longer fit.

The morning slash of sun  
burns the retinae. Faint

and unfamiliar noises portend  
calamity. It may be time to leave.

