

# Falling Towards Oblivion Avenue

*by* Gary Hardaway

## **Life As It Is Now**

A prevailing sense of unease  
born of age and failure.

Diminishing prospects  
in a time of excess and scarcity.

A criminal gesture from  
the irritated driver of the passing car.

The utter silence  
after the online confession.

The online chatter  
after the belligerence.

The ascendance of the vapid  
after the belligerent assertion

of unsubstantiated  
assertions.

## **OBJECTS IN MIRROR ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR**

Things are larger and closer in poems  
than in the ordinary light of days:

the body of Hector, dragged around the walls of Troy;  
the bodies of lovers, twisting in the winds of hell;

the body of Ophelia, drifting downstream;  
The body of Jesus, unrisen, in the tomb where he lay.

Poems try very hard- sometimes, too hard-  
to make you slow down and pay attention.

You see how important poems are  
in ordinary light. So important they have

their own warm month in the land of the deal  
in which to be ignored.

### **Pattern Language**

At some point, you care  
just enough to wake each morning,  
make coffee, and drive to work-  
whatever work there is-  
and not swerve on the highway  
into the concrete columns  
of the overpass. Routine  
is sometimes the world's  
salvation of the otherwise damned.

### **Personal Narrative Arc as a Degenerative Orbit**

We are all falling toward the event horizon  
at different distances  
at differing rates of acceleration.

Some disappear as newborns,  
caught in a wave of congenital gravitons.  
Others vanish at an anticipated actuarial point

in the undulating wave of data.  
I feel elongated and distorted  
and the parts begin to disappoint one another

routinely. The information becomes ever less  
discernible as bursts of static  
pulse through the nerves.

The energies and protoplasmic bits are drawn  
to the crushing center where nothing holds  
and the data field chirps off and is gone.

### **Words Against the Flood**

Why should anyone write  
as the species we write of  
gyrates at the end of its time?

Words can't slow the glacial melt  
or de-acidify the seas. Despite  
their elegance, fervor, and fire,

the words effect no barrier  
to physics and inexorable change.  
The symbols will resolve

to mysterious patterns  
pressed against decaying paper  
or arranged as magnetic pulses

unreadable without the smashed  
and voltage sensitive machines  
that can't survive a little water.

