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:

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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.