

Lamenting Lexiconical Loss

by Gary Hardaway

Each day I lose another word.
Today's loss left its clean
rectangular spot edged neatly by dust.

A short word-- only six or seven letters
depending on how fat or lean
its letters were. Technical,

judging by the linear shape it leaves.
Others have left ellipses and circles
suggesting sonorous vowels

and expansive connotations.
Neglected long enough, uncalled for
by the shrinking language of the day,

my words abandon me.
Some return to taunt, whispering
themselves at the edge of recognition,

leaving a sonic smear somewhere near
the place I remember a once clean spot.
Others are so sullen they never

trouble me again, disappearing altogether.
Sometimes, though, I'll spot one
on a crowded page, recognize

its special shape again, and split

the fatted dictionary open to its
place of honor and delight,

and call it to my shelf again
with promises never to forget
its shape and texture on the tongue.

