Late Eulogy

by Gary Hardaway

I'm a decade getting to these words,
chided child who ate his apples core and all;
who collected ivory carvings
while we collected baseball cards and Barbies;
quiet genius among the noisy bright.

I have the small scar yet, grey-blue
where you stabbed me with a yellow No. 2
in schoolyard play. You probably
remembered with regret that
and all the other tiny, accidental, hurts
as you closed the trunk
and switched the safety off,
intent to harm yourself alone.
Once again you read us wrong.
You never could quite gage
the distances between yourself and us.
The greater scar
you never knew you gave me.

We wished it had been murder.
It's easier to hate for hurtfulness
One you never knew.
We were left with hating only you
for taking one we weren't prepared to lose.
We never learned to make that clear.

Eccentric, brilliant, troubled, friend:
I've finally said good-bye of sorts.
I hope whatever surrounds you now
is kinder to you than we
and you knew how to be.

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