

Not Death but Decrepitude

by Gary Hardaway

terrifies me.

The sudden stroke, the massive heart attack,
that leaves me incapable of acquiring
and raising a pistol to my head.
A bedridden ward of the state,
warehoused in a nursing home,
unable to drive to the liquor store
for whiskey and cigarettes,
is the end game that permeates
recurrent nightmares now-
all dreams of flight banished by
a condition of utter dependency.

