

Scratching into January, 2017

by Gary Hardaway

Short List

My first responsible act today
shall be the listing of responsible acts
I should undertake.
Coffee first, though,
a little music, and a quick
perusal of the Internet.
Oh, look- puppies!

Short Sleeves on New Year's Day

It's Texas, after all, epicenter
of anomalies and perverse inversions.
How did such oddly beautiful land

end up in the hands of the worst people
in history? The malignant gimp governor,
his evil lieutenant, a bought and paid for

legislature. Follow the money. It seeks
the lowest of the low and finds them here
in an embarrassing abundance.

White Dwarf

When not at work, or on my way in my car to and from work, I am at

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home- the sad little one bedroom that home has become- or on a rigorous path between bank, liquor store, gas station, and supermarket to support said sad little home. I strive for safe and sane repetition and the safety of solitude. I have circumscribed a small slice of the planet where I can survive. All that I can't control terrifies me. I collapse, like an old star, on and on, towards a used up little ball of consolidating matter. White dwarf, I am, awaiting that ultimate heat death of my black dwarf and the calm of pure mass- no light, no heat.

Living with Terror

Terror slouches in the cat-scratched, overstuffed chair in my living room.

It has the look of one come to stay without invitation.

The smell of blood, urine, and feces fills my small apartment.

I threaten it with bug spray, kitchen knives, small appliances, and large pots and pans but, still ,no signs it will ever flee

to safer quarters in Highland Park or Germantown.

It is immune to my pleadings and threats.

It is immune to the white magic of poems and songs.

It is immune, even, to bribery and a thrust fist.

I'd sprinkle it with gasoline and throw a match

but I have unmet neighbors and lazy cats.

Generation

If I had no son

and his beautiful daughters,
I could say, "Fuck this shit.

Bring on the bombs. What have I
got to lose?" Progeny
change everything. Allow us to

rethink our hatred of the species,
so virulent and ugly.
I am trapped by my genetic destiny

to pray that we be spared,
knowing all the while
that we have never deserved it.

