

# The Beauties Abandon You

*by* Gary Hardaway

The abandonment may start with hair.  
The color leaves, the strands themselves  
flee in squadrons down the drain  
or cling to the tines of the comb.

The eyes might well be next, changing  
shape, losing focus, requiring lenses or lasers  
or other augmentation too gruesome to consider.

The ears will leave you, too, repaying  
the sharp abuses of bands at maximum volume  
and the banshee screams of racing cars.  
Alas, restraint's a talent learned best late.

The skin will stay but you won't see it,  
camouflaged by creases, tags, and curious  
deposits of renegade fat and pigment.

When muscle tone and joint strength  
join the absent attributes, you'll slump  
within your favorite chair and wonder  
what became of you, once fiercely vertical.

When the last and greatest beauty goes-  
the boundless gift to recognize them all-  
you won't be there. You abandon you.

