

The Gallery of Wounds

by Gary Hardaway

I become a catalogue of wounds.
Here is the jagged crescent scar
on the left hand
that extended to steady me
as we explored the abandoned shed
behind the weed-choked vacant house.

The corrugated tin, left untrimmed
by time's degradations,
gashed the palm's edge.
The blood is memorable
as is the copper taste of that
momentary certainty of lockjaw.

Here, on the left upper arm,
is the faintest recollection
of the smallpox vaccination.
The deep sprain to the right wrist,
suffered trying to fly a homemade
broomstick and bed sheet glider

from the carport roof
and never examined by the doctor,
asserts itself as stiffness still
and the old misalignments
pop as the hand revolves.
Some wounds are too deep

and can't be seen but only sensed
by their effects, like dark matter.
The dark wounds abide,
invisible but full of gravity

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that alters the direction
and velocity of personal history.

