

Towards the End of Memory

by Gary Hardaway

Parade

Let the bands play on.
Let the huge balloons bobble along,

waving in the wind, stretching
ropes and the muscles of handlers.

Let the singers lip-synch their small hits.
Let the Broadway musical casts

suppress their shivering and promote the show.
Let the police horsemen keep the peace.

Let the B-list celebrities make appearances.
Let the happy speak of morning hosts

babble on and name the small town high schools
whose young performers strut their little fame.

Be of good cheer. It is all a shameless
plea for commerce American as the holiday itself.

Accountability

Responsibility without authority-
the fate of middlings and expendables.
Authority without responsibility-

the privilege of uppers and owners.

Uncertainty

Because our histories
and sociologies show us
what we are- vicious, angry,
avaricious, frightened, brutal-
it is easy to wish for our extinction

though some small hope for otherwise
arises as a tear and a tragic love
shudders through the viscera.

Infinite Sadness

This will be the century of infinite sadness,
sadder even than the Twentieth
with its expansive catalog of horrors.

Our close genetic relatives will go extinct
as we destroy habitat after habitat
pursuing cheap consumer goods,

illusions of corporate growth rates,
and higher returns on investment.
Capital will devour us all as it devours itself.

Extinctions, one by one and two by two,
until our own erases all memory
of the world we made and destroyed.

Sacrifices

It's certain that none of us deserves redemption based on genealogy. Slave traders, slave owners, rabid misogynists, anti-Semites, simple frauds, bullshit artists, capitalist assholes.

We are tarnished by our progenitors.
We are tarnished by our own failures.
We are tarnished and undeserving of mercy.
Kill us all as sacrifices to the perfect Jesus.

