

Gary Beck

Visitation II

I remembered Aunt Florence
 now dead,
who phoned me
on her rotary dial telephone
when she was 95 years old
 and confided:
“I’m at the crossroads
 of my life”.

Systems Descent

As the poor get poorer,
more desperate
crime becomes the only option
to those without resources
for continuation.

As the rich get richer
they quickly forget
dependence on others
while feasting on caviar,
drinking fine wines,
able to buy what they want
as long as the store stays open,
get anything repaired
as long as repairmen function.

When the system crumbles
because the people are unnourished
the rich assume they'll sail away
on luxurious mega-yachts
and find welcome elsewhere
until they consume
the final refuge.

Pre-Collapse

As society decays
function diminishes,
the simplest chores,
now daunting tasks,
once whizzed through
by a competent nation
now clumsy, inept,
becoming a danger to itself
as the system ages,
caretakers incapable
of maintaining order.

Too Late the Warning

We walk the concrete of cities
no longer remembering
why we gathered together
in earlier times,
protection against nomads,
tired of wandering,
a stable food supply.

And we built walls
to keep out undesirables.
But we no longer have walls
and undesirables proliferate
polluting the landscape,
threatening the safety of the road,
streets clogged with the mentally ill
as we lack time, resources, caring
to heal the disturbed

And as tourists course the shopping lanes
they do not know the blind despair
that taints so many citizens
deprived of jobs, homes, hope,
expectations dwindling
except for the children of privilege,
for the wealthy have forgotten
the pledge of our forefathers
for equal opportunity,

So the offspring of the poor,
denied the tools
to build a better life,
despite talent and potential
to enrich a failing society
are callously discarded.

Too many turn to crime, drugs,
the only beckoning avenue
to obtain valued goods,
brand name sneakers, jackets,
earned illicitly,
the money not more tainted
than Wall Street bonuses,
though acquired differently.

And as most of us fade
from the once bright promise
alternatives evaporate
and the people know fear,
but do not know how to prevent
impending disaster.

Inevitable Decline

The decline of memory
starts with minor forgetting
virtually unnoticed
in the daily function,
then brief awareness
of sudden, blank moments,
a person, place, or thing
invisibly subtracted
from the store of data
requiring conscious effort
to retrieve the lost word.
Then understanding dawns
the gap grows wider
between thought and recollection
as the process hurries
until you remember nothing.

Gary Beck has spent most of his adult life as a theater director, and as an art dealer when he couldn't make a living in theater. He has 11 published chapbooks. His poetry collections include: *Days of Destruction* (Skive Press), *Expectations* (Rogue Scholars Press), *Dawn in Cities*, *Assault on Nature*, *Songs of a Clerk*, *Civilized Ways*, *Displays* (Winter Goose Publishing). *Fault Lines*, *Perceptions*, *Tremors and Perturbations* will be published by Winter Goose Publishing. *Conditioned Response* (Nazar Look). *Resonance* (Dreaming Big Press). His novels include: *Extreme Change* (Cogwheel Press) *Acts of Defiance* (Artema Press). *Flawed Connections* (Black Rose Writing). *Call to Valor* will be published by Gnome on Pigs Productions. His short story collection, *A Glimpse of Youth* (Sweatshoppe Publications). *Now I Accuse* and other stories will be published by Winter Goose Publishing. His original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway. His poetry, fiction and essays have appeared in hundreds of literary magazines. He currently lives in New York City.