

WATCHING THEM PLAY

Ensnared in throes of bodily decline,
we smile at remnants of lost Eden's prior state
still blithely bubbling from these young at play.

If we could but instill our words of wisdom—
lessons gleaned from journeys long and hard—
into these sweet, unhardened, pliant minds
of glad grandchildren dancing at our feet . . .

What! Warp such transient innocence so soon?
Too sadly true, their span of youth's vitality
is shortly destined to diminish, wear away,
until they join our retrospective reminiscences
of past play's pleasures in life's precious prime.

Not yet! Let our advice, these seasoned admonitions,
be precisely aimed, evoked by present dangers,
not to warn of future worries, borne by us.
Our memory's wistful watching would be spoiled
by frown's display of merry mood grown cold.
How easily they might make *us* their reverie,
departing pristine paradise for worlds of care.

— *David L. Hatton, 5/1/2018*