

# Poem on the Table

*by Gary Hardaway*

Go ahead—vivisect the poem.  
It won't die if you should slice  
and peel away the skin  
to trace the muscles  
and tendons of control.

Its intelligence won't be  
diminished when you take  
a bone saw to its cranium  
and explore the hemispheres  
and wrinkles of its brain.

Its sexuality isn't compromised  
if you reveal the paired gonads.  
A poem can't be killed  
by a bladed, clamped,  
and scissored investigation.

Even a stake  
through its heart  
has no effect—  
it breathes again and even  
burned and buried carries on.

