

3 Poems

by Gary Hardaway

An End of Wonder

There is wonder yet in the world:
the bee's intricate dance each flower

which one must marvel at
before it goes with all the others

into the records we keep of how
another species disappeared;

the way the light made
93 million miles away splays itself

through ice and hydrocarbons
across the early sky;

how the seedling thrusts up
through the packed ground

to resurrect the shumard oak again against
the squirreled and distilled petroleum odds.

There is wonder yet and yet
it is visible now: the last wonder

witnessed by the last human eyes
before the cause of wonder dies.

Remains

We have always been a trashy species.
We study ourselves by examining
garbage-- a pile of mussel shells here,
mounds of pecan shells there—

and, always, the bones of the dead,
whether straight or inside mummified
shells or the still supple bodies
preserved by bogs or layers of snow

compacted by centuries. Those who left it
never intended the evidence
to be disturbed unless by the gods.
We live with similar illusions now.

Supernumerary

Here we are, impoverished children
of impoverished parents, teaching ourselves

survival tactics in filthy streets
we make ourselves between the rows

of scavenged-garbage huts--
here, a sturdy one of corrugated steel,

there, a flimsy one of cardboard
and splintered crate wood.

Emptied piss-pots trickle down
the center of our streets to water flies.

What have we to keep ourselves amused
but fistfights and fucking in the shadows?

What have we to wear but what we steal?
What have we to eat but what we get

in trade for what we steal or buy with money
drug thugs give when we deliver?

They will not hire us for the shops
or for the scaffolds, stacking bricks,

or for the warehouse docks, loading
the cheap shoes our sisters sew and glue.

We are the extras no one needs
that slither out from people fucking people.

