

# Clarinet

*by Gary Hardaway*

We had disposable income once-  
at least enough to act at times as if we did-  
and disposed of it often

for Half Price books- so many  
remaindered poets yet unread-  
and curios at after Christmas clearances

where cash flow matters more than profit.  
So it was, eight years ago, December,  
that I bought the clarinet

that ornaments the large buffet  
that stands against  
the windowless north living room wall.

It's beautiful to look at and to hold  
though true musicians would be appalled  
by the black plastic

emulating ebonized wood  
and its history of songless silence.  
Long ago, I chose the clarinet

as the instrument I'd learn  
in junior high school band before  
I learned that making music is a luxury

families like mine cannot afford  
and wouldn't drafting class  
be better for me than band?

